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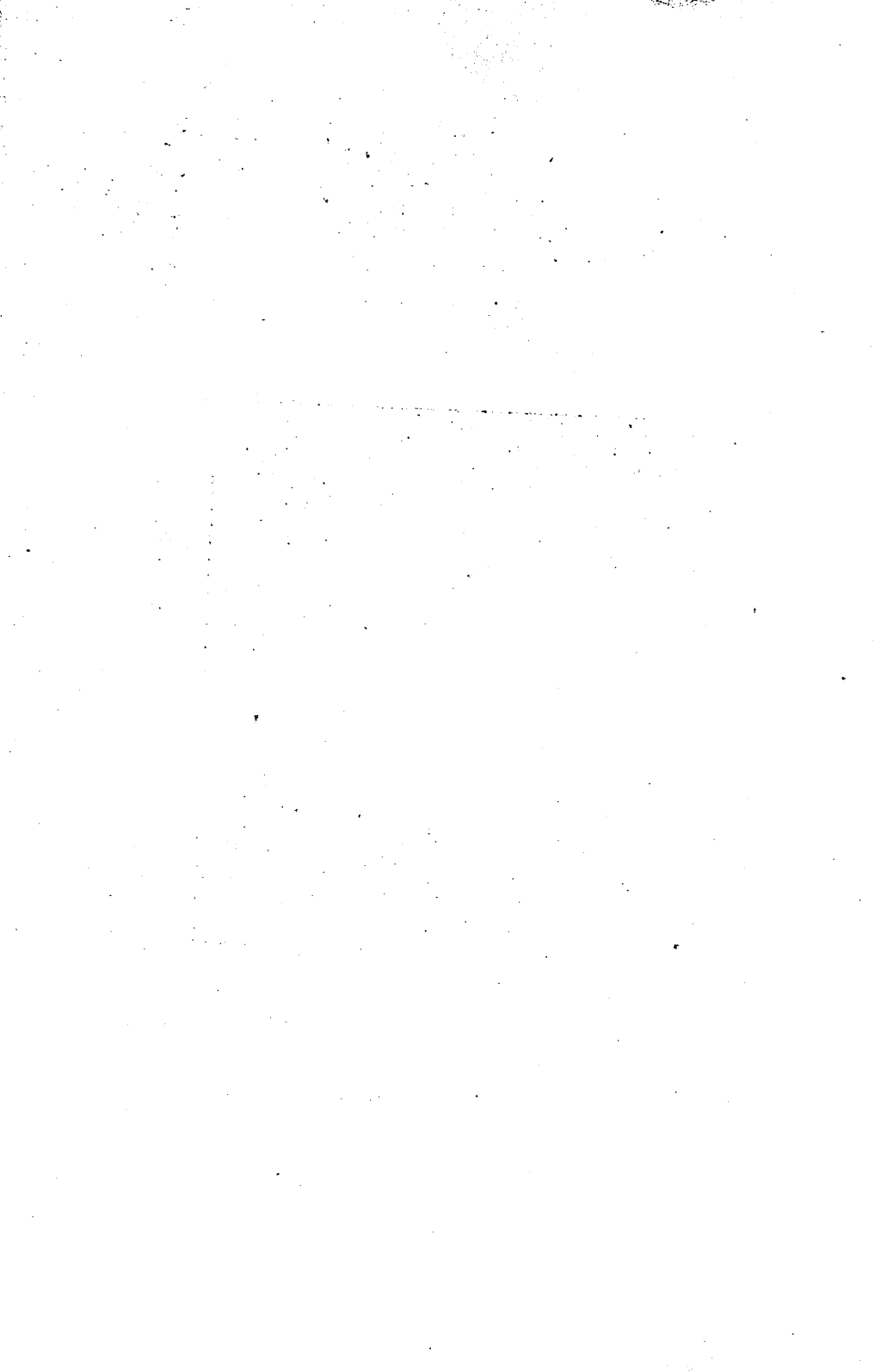
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PREACHERS
AND THEIR METHODS

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July 1902.

NINETEENTH CENTURY PREACHERS

AND THEIR METHODS

BY THE

REV. JOHN EDWARDS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

REV. ARTHUR E. GREGORY, D.D.

EDITOR OF

"THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE" "BOOKS FOR BIBLE STUDENTS" ETC.

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INTRODUCTION



MY friend of many years, and colleague of long ago, has asked me to write a brief Introduction to this volume. I do not see that it needs any such preface, but I am under such manifold obligations to the author that I am glad to comply with any request of his. The papers originally appeared in *The Preacher's Magazine*. They were much appreciated by the readers, and were favourably noticed in many reviews. In some cases the chapters have been revised by their subjects. Mr. Spurgeon was specially pleased with the sketch of his sermon-methods, and wrote asking me to convey his thanks to the writer.

Mr. Edwards has had a long and extensive acquaintance with young preachers, and has won the gratitude of hundreds who have been helped by his kindly and judicious work in connection with the Homiletic Classes of *The Preacher's Magazine* Union for Biblical and Homiletic Study. In writing this

book the author has, I think, had these young men chiefly in his mind, though there are many others who will read it with interest and profit.

Mr. Edwards has not attempted anything approaching to a complete portrait gallery, for some of the most distinguished preachers of the nineteenth century are not mentioned. But typical cases have been chosen, and the result is a volume that will be of real value to a large number of preachers.

Most preachers are made, not born ; that is, they only attain success by honest work, careful and protracted study, and by communion with God. The best stairway to the pulpit is the Ladder of St. Augustine.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

It is good to read such records as this book gives of the methods and the aims of men who have proved themselves "masters of assemblies." There are few things better for young preachers than to know something of the inner life of those who have been the most influential, the most effective preachers. For the preacher ought to accomplish something, ought so to preach that he saves both himself and

those who hear him. He is "sent" to "reap" as well as to sow. He must not be a mere president or organising secretary of a religious community; he must be in the true apostolic succession, and his word must be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. But there is much that a preacher ought to learn which no theological college can teach.

*And He goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He Himself would: and they went unto Him. And He appointed twelve that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach.*¹

This is the beginning of the preacher's training, and the essential part of it—to BE WITH HIM and to be SENT FORTH BY HIM. After this, many lessons may be learnt: without it, the preacher is as sounding brass or clanging cymbal.

This book will, I hope, be read by many young men whose ministry will be chiefly exercised in villages, small towns, and comparatively obscure congregations. These are the men who most need encouragement, stimulus, inspiration. The smaller and duller the congregation, the more necessary it is that the preacher should glory in his

¹ St. Mark ii. 13, 14.

office. "The country parson preacheth constantly; the pulpit is his joy and his throne." He does not offer to God and his people that which doth cost him nothing, or think poor preaching is good enough for poor people. "He procures attention by all possible art," he chooses "texts of devotion, not controversy—moving and ravishing texts, whereof the Scriptures are full." "The character of his sermon is Holiness: he is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy."¹ I have heard many of the greatest preachers of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The two who made the deepest impression upon me were Frederick Denison Maurice and George Müller, and I heard each of them only once. They were not "witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy," and for thirty years I have carried with me the thoughts and aspirations they inspired.

It is good to hear great preachers, good to read about them. It is not good to envy them, or to feel that popularity is a thing to be grasped at. Perhaps there is nothing more needed amongst preachers to-day than a purer ambition, less alloyed by thoughts of the world and the newspapers. It would be a pity if any man should lay down this book, feeling that he also must strive to become

¹ Herbert's *A Priest to the Temple*: The Parson Preaching.

great, or at least popular—not that either greatness or popularity are to be despised if they come to us. Popularity is like wealth—neither good nor bad. All depends upon the use you make of it. Here John the Baptist is our model. He escaped the temptation of all preachers, the special temptation of popular preachers, forgetting himself in his mission, not his mission in himself—

Who counts it gain
His light should wane,
So the whole world to Jesus throng.

Finally, may I venture to commend to the young preacher as the chiefest and most fruitful of all studies—that of the Word of God? We have an ever-growing number of good books—books that help the preacher to make sermons, and from which it is easy to make good quotations; but none of these can compensate for the neglect of daily reading and meditation in the Divine Library.

And from the study of the life and work of the preachers who are referred to here, let the reader turn once again to the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word. We may have many teachers, but One is our Master, even Christ.

“Give yourself to God, that you may speak in the humility of Jesus Christ, confessing that your

doctrine is not yours, nor of you, but of the Gospel. Imitate, above all things, the simplicity of the words and of the similitudes which our Lord makes use of in Holy Scripture, when speaking to the people. Think what wonders He might have taught! What mysteries might He not have revealed of the Divinity, and of His admirable perfections—He who was the eternal Wisdom of His Father! Yet you see how simply He speaks, and how He makes use of familiar comparisons — of a labourer, of a vine-dresser, of a field, of a vine, of a grain of mustard seed. It is thus you ought to speak, if you would be intelligible to the people to whom you preach the Word of God.”¹

ARTHUR E. GREGORY.

THE CHILDREN'S HOME,
BONNER ROAD, N.E.

¹ St. Vincent de Paul.

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NINETEENTH CENTURY PREACHERS AND THEIR METHODS



I

HENRY WARD BEECHER

With all respect to the critics, we confess that our conception of a sermon is different from that which is sometimes found in the books. There is all the difference in the world between a sermon that is a growth and one that has been built according to plans and specifications. And important, moreover, as the rules of homiletics are, there are times when the highest order of preaching transcends them.

THESE words seem to us to express exactly the differences which undeniably exist between Mr. Beecher's sermons and the homiletic ideal. That ideal propounds plans, which, if followed, make the sermon a formal and stately *structure*; his sermons were *growths*, born sometimes of the mood of the moment, and springing into gracefulness and vigour with all the rapidity which is characteristic of tropical vegetation. His theory of preaching will help us to understand his style. This was, in his own words: "To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ; to have Christ so melted and dissolved in you, that when

you preach your own self you preach Him as Paul did ; to have every part of you living and luminous with Christ ; and then to make use of everything that is in you, your analogical reasoning, your logical reasoning, your imagination, your mirthfulness, your humour, your indignation, your wrath ; to take everything that is in you all steeped in Jesus Christ, and to throw yourself with all your power upon a congregation,—that has been my theory of preaching the gospel. . . . I have felt that man should consecrate every gift that he has got in him that has any relation to the persuasion of men and to the melting of men—that he should put them all on the altar, kindle them all, and let them burn for Christ's sake."

Such being his theory, how did he prepare himself for the task?—in other words, how did he get his sermons? The answer to this question can be given in one short sentence—Mr. Beecher made his whole life one long preparation for the pulpit. He lived with that work always in sight, and made everything contribute its share to the supreme object which he had in view. But it will be instructive to the ordinary preacher to learn more of the details of his methods, and concerning these we have ample information in the recently published *Biography*.

Mr. Beecher attributed his power as a preacher to a close study of the preaching of the apostles, both in respect to their *matter* and *methods*. His early success he was accustomed to trace to two things: a vivid realisation of the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the habit of preparing his sermons with a view to reaching some specific object, and doing some definite

work. He studied the Bible and human nature, and, when a difficult *case* came before him, would hunt the Bible through in order to discover the right way of influencing the mind of that individual, and leading him to the Saviour of sinners. This it was which led him to form the *habit* of studying men, their dispositions, their wants, and their peculiarities; and when this knowledge had been gained, he would set to work in order to lead the individual to a righteous and godly life. Such definiteness in preaching, especially in the wilder regions where the early years of his ministry were spent, sometimes provoked the anger of evil men, but it was fruitful in the best results.

Mr. Beecher carefully prepared for the pulpit by *a close and detailed study of the Bible*. The Gospels he read and re-read with the greatest care, using all possible helps; making notes of the results of his meditations; and sometimes giving all his strength to a careful analysis of the points of the history or discourse. In later life, when his time was much occupied, he still kept up this practice. Mr. Pond, who travelled with him thousands of miles, says that "Bible reading and study was a part of his daily work while on the train." One winter he carried with him constantly Stanley's *Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians*, which he read and annotated from beginning to end.

He was constantly on the lookout for *subjects* and *illustrations for sermons*. Many of his notebooks came into the hands of the editors of the *Biography*. They were found to contain "subjects, heads of sermons jotted down at moments of inspira-

tion—in the family circle, on the railroad, in the street car, after a talk with some friend . . . these were the acorn-thoughts out of which grew up in time strong, wide-spreading oak-tree sermons.” His early habit of studying men was not only kept up, but grew with his years; and during his Brooklyn life he made it his business to get into conversation with all sorts and conditions of men, in order to acquaint himself with their methods of thought, their occupations, and their trials and difficulties.

For his preaching there was *always going on a certain kind of preparation*, though a great part of it was involuntary. “It consisted in a certain study of the processes of nature around him, examining them and digesting them, until he saw the relations in which they stood to other facts, and a principle was discovered or an illustration of some deeper moral and spiritual truth was gained. This action of his mind, we believe, became almost automatic. He had *an insatiable curiosity to learn facts*. But he wanted them for the same reason that a miller wants grain, to grind and make bread. So he worked them over until he had got something from them that fed his mind or heart, and this was the only way he could remember them.”

So much respecting *general preparation*. Reading, observation, the storage of facts, meditation on the deeper meaning of facts,—these are processes well known to all wise preachers. How did Mr. Beecher utilise his facts and forces, his wide knowledge and intellectual power, in the actual preparation of the sermon? Here his methods were peculiar and all his own. Few men could successfully imitate his

example. Speaking on this subject, he once said—"My whole life is a general preparation. Everything I read, everything I think, all the time, whether it is secular, philosophic, metaphysic, or scientific,—it all of it goes into the atmosphere with me; and then, when the time comes for me to do anything—I do not know why it should be so, except that I am of that temperament—it crystallises, and very suddenly too; and so much of it as I am going to use for that distinct time comes right up before my mind in full form, and I sketch it down, and rely upon my facility, through long experience, to give utterance and full development to it after I come before an audience. There is nothing in this world that is such a stimulus to me as an audience. It wakes up the power of thinking, and wakes up the power of imagination in me." Few men could bear such testimony, and perhaps few men could attain success by similar methods.

His biographer gives us a graphic picture of his life on *Saturday*, and his methods of sermonising. "The more special preparation for preaching on the Sabbath began on Saturday, and consisted in doing as little work as possible—doing what pleased him, making it a kind of active rest-day. Perhaps, if the weather permitted, he ran up to Peekshill to look over the place, and get rid of all friction and rasp by giving attention to its common and homely details, or to feed his imagination by looking out upon its beautiful landscape. Perhaps he spent it in the city. If so, he has probably been over to New York, looking into shop windows, dropping into Appleton's to look at books, or into Tiffany's to

look at gems, having a little chat in each place with some of the clerks. You may be sure he did not forget his afternoon nap of from one to two hours: wherever he was he aimed to secure that. He has fed well to-day, but has been careful not to eat anything that does not agree with him. He will have the body in perfect order for the great work of to-morrow. The evening he spent quietly at home, or, possibly, ran into one or two of the homes where he was most familiar, where he could have his own way, and not be bored by anybody's trying to draw him out into some excited discussion. If you had followed him there, you would very likely have found him taking his ease upon the sofa, while the family life went on around him, in which he took part by humorous sallies or quiet suggestions, as the fancy prompted him; home . . . and to bed by eleven o'clock. Up to this time he has not decided upon the subject or text that he will handle on the morrow; to have chosen it so early as this, especially to have written any part of it down, would have killed his sermon the next day. He could not have kindled up to it and made it a living thing, if it had been for so long a time buried on parchment. . . .

"His Sunday morning sermons were prepared after breakfast, and the evening sermons after tea. He would retire to his study and think out the result which he wished to reach, making outline-notes of the steps by which he proposed to reach it. He could never preach a sermon on a given topic unless it was *in his mind*. It sometimes happened that, after wrestling with his subject in his study for an hour or two, and finally preparing a very unsatis-

factory outline of what he wanted to preach, he would go to his church, and, while the choir were singing the opening hymn, the whole subject would come up before his mind in the form he wanted. Hastily tearing a fly-leaf from his hymn-book, or taking the back of his notes, he would sketch out in a few lines the new-born sermon, which would perhaps occupy an hour in its delivery. These were very apt to be among his best sermons."

We do not present this method of Mr. Beecher's as a model for general imitation: the preacher who is without his special temperament and training can never hope to rival him in his success. But the story is not without its lessons to those whose habits of work are most remote from those which he adopted. If we follow him in his painstaking study of *Scripture*, of *nature*, and of *man*, we shall find ourselves becoming more and more effective in our pulpit ministrations, and ever more successful in our methods of proclaiming the gospel of salvation.

II

BISHOP PHILLIPS BROOKS

O Lord and Sovereign of my life, take from me the spirit of idleness, despair, love of power and unprofitable speaking.—PRAYER OF EPHRÆM OF SYRIA.

THESE words—found in one of the notebooks of the great preacher after his death—seem to give the key to his inner life, and to express with great accuracy the spirit in which he attempted and performed his life-task. Sharing with Beecher and Moody the honours of the American pulpit, and in some points perhaps surpassing both these teachers as an influence in the national life it is as a preacher that Phillips Brooks will be best remembered. Although the two portly volumes in which Professor Allen has told the story of his life are not likely ever to become popular, and are weighted with too many letters and dissertations to attract any but the most patient and omnivorous reader, they will prove a very interesting study to all who delight in watching the inception and development of a great preacher's career. If the almost interminable pages could be skilfully condensed, and brought into the compass of a moderately sized volume, the book would rival in interest the finest

modern biography, and be worthy to rank with those sermons and lectures which Phillips Brooks gave to the world, and which have aroused nearly as much interest as did the writings of F. W. Robertson.

It is not our intention here to give a detailed sketch of Dr. Brooks' life, but rather to refer to his work as a preacher, and to point out those methods by which he obtained such a commanding influence in the religious world.

Born of a sturdy Puritan stock, and trained in the best traditions of Puritanism under the careful eyes of a godly father and a praying mother, the foundations of his character were well and truly laid, and the young life was early, if unconsciously, prepared for its great mission. His education was begun in the Latin School at Boston, and continued at Harvard; but at that date there was no indication of the possession of those powers which ultimately made him one of the world's most potent religious teachers. He was at first designated for the teaching profession; and, although he was earnest and attentive to his duties, his attempts in that direction ended in comparative failure. Having at length determined to give his life to the service of Christ in His Church, he spent three rather dull years in a Theological Seminary in Virginia, where, in addition to studying theology on the somewhat narrow lines then in vogue, he read widely on his own account. Here his power of concentrated and steady work soon began to tell, and those who knew him best foretold for him a career of usefulness, if not of popularity. But his real powers began to

develop and to reveal themselves after he was settled in his first rectorial charge at Philadelphia. Here it was that he began to feel the joy and the responsibility of the prophet's mission, and commenced that career of popularity which made him in later life one of the foremost preachers of the age.

Like all great souls, he had to pass through a period of trial and disappointment. The first and second years of his ministry brought to him great weariness of spirit, and filled his heart with a keen sense of loneliness and of depression. He was learning not merely the rudiments of the preacher's profession, but also to estimate his own powers, and to sound the deepest needs of the human soul. In these early days he had a fondness for unusual and peculiar texts; as, for example, Ex. xxviii. 34, 35, "A golden bell and a pomegranate," etc., which he expounded in characteristic fashion—"the pomegranate stands for the accumulation of life and its ripening fruit in the soul; the bell for its living utterance and proclamation." In later years the use of such phrases was ridiculed as merely clerical affectation, and he usually selected texts which plainly declared either the great truths of revelation or the great principles of the Christian religion.

Having at length found his true vocation, he concentrated attention upon his work, and sought to make all his powers and capacities contribute to its forcefulness and success.

He had no ambition to be known as a profound scholar, a great organiser, or a sturdy ecclesiastic—

for the figment of Apostolic Succession he had a healthy contempt—all his energies were employed in bringing his message home to the heart and conscience of his hearers. He studied science, literature, biography, history, poetry, but always with the pulpit in view; and was ever ready to seize on some rich metaphor, some illuminating analogy, or some fact of history or life which could be used to illustrate his chosen themes. He believed in hard work and careful preparation, and his happiest and apparently most spontaneous utterances were all born of careful thought, and developed with the most strenuous application of his powers. As his biographer says, "He may be called a genius, but if so, a clearer light is thrown upon the nature of a genius; it is a capacity for harder work, more persistent than in ordinary men." He believed that human responsibility is only limited by human power and opportunity; and, strong in this belief, he endeavoured to use his own powers to the utmost. In this he was admittedly successful. Men of all schools of thought paid tribute to his marvellous influence and power. Dr. Hort, who heard him preach during one of his visits to England, wrote: "There was no rhetoric, but abundance of vivid illustrations, never irreverent, and never worked up for effect, but full of point and humour."

Purpose

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Mr. Bryce, in comparing his preaching with that of Wilberforce, Spurgeon, and Liddon, said—

"In all these it was impossible to forget the speaker in the words spoken, because the speaker did not seem to have quite forgotten himself, but to have studied the effect he sought to produce.

With him it was otherwise. What amount of preparation he may have given to his discourses I do not know. But there was no sign of art about them, no touch of self-consciousness. He spoke to his audience as a man might speak to his friend, pouring forth with swift yet quiet and seldom impassioned earnestness the thoughts and feelings of a singularly pure and lofty spirit. The listeners never thought of style and manner, but only of the substance of the thoughts."

Dr. Bruce gives us a further estimate, which is perhaps even more generous than the preceding. Speaking of the preachers of his own Church and country in comparison with Phillips Brooks, he says—

"Our great preachers take into the pulpit a bucket full or half-full of the word of God, and then by the force of personal mechanism they attempt to convey it to the congregation. But this man is just a great water main, attached to the great reservoir of God's truth and grace and love; and streams of life, by a heavenly gravitation, pour through him to refresh every weary soul."

Another keen observer writes—

"His secret does not lie in his thought or style; not in his utterance, which is rapid almost to incoherency:— . . . but in his evident honesty of conviction, sincerity of purpose, and earnestness of desire,—he does not think of himself or of the impression he is making; also in that he approaches men on the side of their helpfulness. . . . He knows what is in us all. He speaks out of the common experience, and comes right to the heart of men."

It is very interesting to compare with these estimates of Phillips Brooks and his pulpit utterances his own ideas on the subject of preaching as they were embodied in his advice to young men preparing for the work of the ministry. We can only give one or two brief sentences, but many more might be culled from his *Yale Lectures on Preaching*—

“There must be a man behind every sermon.”

“The real power of your oratory must be your own intelligent delight in what you are doing.”

“To be dead in earnest is to be eloquent.”

“The sermon is truth and man together. It is the truth brought through the man.”

“Never allow yourself to feel equal to your work. If you ever find that spirit growing upon you, try to preach on your most exacting theme, to show yourself how unequal to it you are.”

It is in utterances such as these that the aim and purpose of the man are revealed; and no one can study the career of Phillips Brooks without feeling that in them he was embodying the fruit of his own ripe thought and practical experience.

The great preacher, like the great artist, has generally to formulate his own rules and to shape his own methods. He may learn much from his predecessors and his contemporaries; but just as the artist who possesses originality and genius has to work out his own ideas in his own way, so the great preacher has to fashion and shape the unchanging message of the gospel to his own purpose; he, at least, can never be a mere imitator. Still the study of the methods of a genius is always helpful to his

less gifted brethren, and we are fortunate in having at our disposal a fairly complete account of the sermon methods of this accomplished orator. The strong note in all his work is—*concentration*; and his chosen motto might have been—"This one thing I do."

"Preaching was the one exclusive object that occupied his mind. The message to be delivered, and the form it should take in order to be most effective,—to that simple end he devoted himself. From morning till night, in every hour of leisure or apparent relaxation, on his journeys, in vacations, in social assemblies, he was thinking of subjects for sermons; turning over new aspects of old truth, thrilling inwardly with the possibility of giving better form than had yet been given to old familiar doctrine. In a word, he concentrated his thought upon one thing,—it was preaching: that was what he lived for, and for that cause he might almost be said to have come into the world."

The first shape which the sermon took was the brief hint in the notebook. This was the germ from which the discourse grew. It seemed to be necessary for him to put it into writing, and thus fix the idea and prevent it from evaporating. His biographer states that "every sermon may thus be traced in its genesis, even every casual speech on slight occasions." With all his ready eloquence, he never trusted to the moment to bring inspiration. His notebooks are full of these germinal ideas, and some of the specimens given reveal the activity and fertility of his mind. One or two may be quoted—

"*Come and See.* A proper appeal to a sceptic, to

Handwritten note:
The sermon
was the one
exclusive object
that occupied
his mind.

come and test Christianity. 1. The truth of the Bible. 2. The phenomenon of Christ. 3. The Christian History. 4. The religious experience—by putting himself into the power of what he did hold."

"*Seek after the LORD.* Acts xv. 17. God nearer than we think. We are blind to what is nearest to us always. Christ, the exhibition of a nearness of God which is already a fact. The difference if we understood it all. God, the atmosphere of life."

"Psalm xc. 16 (Prayer-Book Version). One generation doing a piece of the work of God, and the next generation seeing how splendid it is."

In this way he was always accumulating "seed for sermons." But much laborious work had to be done before the finished product was reached. The "seed brought forth fruit after his kind," but the process of growth was never very rapid. Early in the week he had chosen the text on which he was to write. "On Monday he had his friends with him—it was his day of rest; but through all the conversation he never lost sight of the idea which had inspired him. On the mornings of Monday and Tuesday he was bringing together in his notebook, or on scraps of paper, the thoughts which were cognate to his leading thought, or necessary for its illustration and expansion; collecting, as he called it, the material for the sermon." The morning of Wednesday would be entirely devoted to the careful writing of the plan which he intended to follow, to shaping the form of the sermon. Hundreds of these plans were found after his death, preserved with scrupulous care. They are described as of

uniform size and appearance; each consisting of four pages, and containing a dozen or more detached paragraphs, each paragraph containing one distinct idea. This done, he went over the whole again, setting against each paragraph the number of pages it would occupy when fully developed. The hardest part of the preparatory process was then accomplished; and the mornings of Thursday and Friday were used for the purpose of writing out the finished sermon, each paragraph of this, when completed, being a work of art. Such a sermon would contain some five thousand words. This long and pains-taking preparation was all undertaken with the purpose of giving him freedom when he entered the pulpit. There he appeared like one who was burdened with a message from God, and whose joy it was to utter it to the people.

Amongst the elements of his power were his ability to use all the treasures of his wide reading in his pulpit utterances, and his sure knowledge of what would touch the heart of man. Of his illustrations, it was said that they were drawn "not from his religious autobiography, but from the spiritual biography of the race." Another thing that contributed to his success was his steady and persistent desire to really preach Christ. Of the preacher's perils here he had the clearest knowledge, and ever sought to avoid the danger. In his *Lectures on Preaching* he says—

"The disposition to watch ideas in their working, and to talk about their relations and their influence on one another, simply as problems in which the mind may find pleasure without an entrance of the

soul into the truths themselves,—this, which is the critical tendency, invades the pulpit, and the result is an immense amount of preaching which must be called preaching about Christ, as distinct from preaching Christ. There are many preachers who seem to do nothing else; always discussing Christianity as a problem, instead of announcing Christianity as a message, and proclaiming Christ as a Saviour. . . . It is good to be a Herschel who describes the sun; but it is better to be a Prometheus who brings the sun's fire to the earth."

Phillips Brooks believed in preaching on great themes, the great central truths of Christianity. Again and again this comes out in the pages of the *Life*. During a visit to Germany he writes in his notebook: "I want to try to draw out in order and connection those personal convictions about religious truth which have slowly and separately taken shape in my mind." The topics are suggestive—"God, Revelation, Christ. Prayer. Atonement. The Bible. Moral Life. Personality. The Church. Death. Eternity."

On another occasion he writes—

"These are the great religious words ever deepening—

"1. *Separation from the world*; not the desert or the cell, but independence by service.

"2. *Salvation of the soul*, not from pain, but from sin.

"3. *Prepare to meet thy God*, with glorious and glad welcome. He is always here.

"Be such a man that if all men were like you the world would be saved."

It was by constant meditation on themes like these that Phillips Brooks gained his attractiveness and influence as a preacher. He knew that the true preacher was a man with a "message," and he made it his single aim so to present that message that it could not fail to influence men. And in the pulpit he gained his mightiest influence and did his noblest work. This is not the place to speak of his success as a city rector, or of the wide influence he exerted as bishop; in both spheres he was enabled to do noble work. But one other word must be written. In these days when men talk of the "decay of the pulpit," and utter their loud lamentations over "unattractive preaching," it is well to remember that one of the greatest pulpit orators of modern days believed in the preaching of the future, and was sure that the pulpit was not yet dethroned. Listen to his words—

"The world has not heard its best preaching yet. If there is more of God's truth for men to know, and if it is possible for the men who utter it to become more pure and godly, then, with both of its elements more complete than they have ever been before, preaching must some day be a complete power. But that better preaching will not come by any sudden leap of inspiration. As the preaching of the present came from the preaching of the past, so the preaching that is to be will come from the preaching that is now. If we preach as honestly, as intelligently, and as spiritually as we can, we shall not merely do good in our own day, but help in some real though unrecorded way the future triumphs of the work we love."

Phillips Brooks

III

DR. W. BOYD CARPENTER, BISHOP OF RIPON.¹

A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays—
And confident to-morrows ; with a face
Not worldly minded, for it bears too much
Of nature's impress—gaiety and health,
Freedom and hope ; but keen withal and shrewd.
His gestures note—and hark ! his tones of voice
Are all vivacious as his mien and looks.

WORDSWORTH.

THERE are many indications that the pessimistic temper of recent years, which gave rise to the cry that the pulpit was declining in interest and power, is fast passing away, and giving place to a much higher estimate of the preacher's office. The wider range of topics discussed ; the publicity given to present-day sermons in, at least, a section of the daily press ; the continuous issue and sale of sermon literature ; and the increasing attention which is given to the art of sermon-making, are all witnesses to the fact that the pulpit is again asserting its true position.

The Bishop of Ripon, who is widely known as

¹ *Lectures on Preaching.* By W. Boyd Carpenter, D.D., Bishop of Ripon.

an effective and popular preacher, has recently issued a small volume on "Preaching," in which he gives the result of his ripe experience and wide observation.

The book contains in all six lectures, dealing with "The Preacher and his Training"; "The Sermon and its Structure"; "The Preacher in relation to the Age, and his Aims in his Work." In this paper we shall endeavour to discover something of the Bishop's own aims and methods.

I. *The Preacher himself, and his Training.* — The lecturer recognises at the outset that the foundation of all powerful preaching is to a large extent the personality of the preacher. He quotes the once famous phrase used by an English statesman, that the State needs men of "light and leading," and applies the statement to the needs of the modern pulpit. The preacher must be a man of "light," he "must have a message which brings light to the minds of men. He need not, like the poet, aspire 'to justify the ways of God to men,' but he must be an interpreter of the eternal moral order, of the significance of life, of the subtle processes of the heart of man. He must, in a sense, when once within

The pulpit place,
Interpret God for all.

Or, to translate the same thought into sacred and familiar language, he must have an eternal word of God to deliver to men, a message which is more than man's word."

He must also be a man of "leading"; the truth which he utters must be so transmitted through his

own personality as to become a force which shall influence and persuade men. The preacher must have convictions, not mere opinions, and must be able so to express his convictions that they shall appeal to the minds and hearts of his hearers, and lead them to embrace the truth.

It is, no doubt, in this "personal force" that we must seek for the secret of the charm of all really great preachers, and find the explanation of the vast difference which is frequently perceived between the preached and the printed sermon. "Those who heard Newman preach tell us that it was not exactly the thing said which impressed them, but the sense of the preacher's personality as it passed across the manuscript to the hearer's heart. Another illustration of the same principle is given us in Dr. Chalmers' *Life*. He was fond of preaching his old sermons. He did so openly, giving notice of his intention; but the crowds still came to hear from his lips even sermons which were in print. The personal force of the man gave something which the printed words could not give. The words became luminous as they sprang from his lips."

The really earnest preacher—like Whitefield—puts his soul into his words, and so identifies himself with his subject and his work that he is able to persuade men of the truth of his message. He not merely teaches, or explains, or instructs, but he persuades; and in order to do this "the whole weight of his personal character and will must be thrown into his utterances."

Finding that "personality" is such a prominent factor in the work of the preacher, Bishop Carpenter

urges that "it becomes our duty to regard this as a sacred gift, and to do our best to make it an efficient force." In order to this, two conditions are necessary.

(1) *Be yourself*.—The preacher must endeavour to gain that sober self-confidence which will prevent him from imitating other preachers and speakers, but which will lead him to reliance on his own powers. "The ambition or effort to be other than self ends in disaster and confusion. The primrose should be content to be a primrose, and not try to rival the rose. The willow with its supple branches has its place in nature as well as the firm unyielding oak. It is a safe rule never to violate nature." This is in harmony with the advice given by the famous American preacher—Phillips Brooks: "Independence and the refusal to imitate and repeat other people's lives may come from true modesty as well as from pride. . . . It is not pride when the beech-tree refuses to copy the oak. He knows his limitations. The only chance of any healthy life for him is to be as full a beech-tree as he can. Apply all that, and out of sheer modesty refuse to try to be any kind of preacher which God did not make you to be."

(2) *Suppress yourself*.—While the preacher must avoid being a *copyist*, he must carefully guard himself from the danger of being an *ego-ist*. "If self-expression be true instinct, the safe avenue to self-expression lies through self-repression; for self-consciousness is the hindrance of all free expression, whether by pen or pencil or tongue." True genius and real success can only belong to the man, be he

poet, or novelist, or painter, or architect, who works not merely because a certain task is assigned to him, but because of the enthusiastic joy he feels in the doing of his work ; who works because it is a supreme necessity to him to do that one thing. And the preacher also needs the spring and fervour of spontaneity. "The same spirit kindles in the heart of those who feel that they have a message from God. There is no thought of self. The coal from the Altar has touched their lips. The word of the Lord is as fire in their bones. Necessity is laid upon them. Like the apostle, they cry, 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!'"

Self-consciousness must be got rid of, if the preacher is ever to have real joy in his work, or to bring it to a successful issue. And the cure for it is found in obedience to the first and great commandment : in the possession of "a pure simple love—the love of work, the love of God, the love of man." Very earnestly does the Bishop counsel the young preacher to think not of himself, but of the needs and sorrows of the people to whom he speaks, and to endeavour to realise that he is in very truth the messenger of God. He recalls the example of Haydn, who "never attempted to compose till he had prayed"; of Gounod, upon whose instrument "the head of the Christ was carved, to remind him of Him whose presence and power could sanctify and elevate human work." With this as the inspiration of his life, the preacher will find his work in any and every place, and will be guarded from those temptations to depression and pride which sometimes seem inseparable from his peculiar circumstances.

The preacher should remember that the most intense devotion to his own tasks does not demand any limitation of his studies, but rather the consecration of all study. "If our consecration is to be real, it should be the consecration of all our powers; none of those powers and faculties which God has given us should be suffered to wither and decline." The preacher must strenuously resist every temptation to onesidedness and narrowness, and endeavour so to order his studies that all his intellectual faculties may be kept alert and vigorous. He must cultivate his powers of reasoning, enlarge his stores of knowledge, develop his imagination, and, above all, cultivate to the fullest extent the devotional habit. This latter aim can best be met by constant and thorough study of the Scriptures; the Bible being "the greatest, purest, deepest, and truest book of devotion in the world."

It will be necessary, then, for the preacher to be a diligent and hard-working student. "All the past teaches us that those have best taught the world who have best taught themselves. The apparent ease with which a skilful man does his work, tends however to deceive us. It seems so easy, that we imagine it can be easily done. But this is a deception which reflection will dissipate. The steamship glides past us as we watch it from the shore; she glides over the water like a thing of life; her movement appears to us easy and noiseless; but when we take our place on board we know what effort, what expenditure of thought, labour, and fuel has secured this swift and graceful movement. To the idler on the shore the thing is easy; to the men on

board it means real and ceaseless work. Can we expect that we can do any profitable work without labour? If we desire to reach skill and power, we must be prepared to pay the price, and that price is zealous, sedulous, constant self-cultivation."

2. *The Sermon and its Structure.*—It may be thought that it is impossible to-day to write or say anything fresh on this much discussed subject; yet as every skilled workman has his own method of reaching excellence, so every preacher has his own way of sermon production.

"The first qualification for writing a sermon is, that you should have something to say. No man can carve a statue until he has the stone ready; no man can mould a figure till he has the clay; and no man should imagine that he can write a sermon till he has something to say." How, then, shall the preacher procure his material? The Bishop's reply to this question is: "There is one simple method. . . . I would bid you remember the three R's, which lie at the root of all true knowledge—the same, with one exception, as those with which we are familiar. The three R's I would suggest are, Reflection, Reading, and (the precedent warrants the inaccuracy) Writing."

That reflection—the act of thought—is absolutely indispensable, needs no argument. But the chief point to be remembered is that it should precede reading. Richter says: "Never read till you have thought yourself hungry; never write till you have read yourself full."

In reading, as part of the special preparation for any particular sermon, the preacher should be care-

ful to study everything that "will serve to elucidate and illustrate the subject." But he should do more than this—he should read until he knows the subject thoroughly in all its bearings; remembering Dr. Fitch's maxim: "No person can adequately teach any subject unless he know more than the points he is prepared to put forward."

The Bishop regards "Writing" as one of the chief points in the preparation of the sermon. The preacher, and especially the young preacher, needs to use his pen freely "in the modelling of his sermon"; and all the more, if he intends to be, as he ought to be, an extemporaneous preacher. The best way to proceed is "by writing down the outlines of the subject, and then re-writing it when you have made up your mind as to which is the best form. This method will help (1) to rid the mind of its first crude thoughts; (2) to penetrate to the very heart of the subject; and (3) lead to the freshest and best method of arranging and presenting the thought."

In the arrangement of the sermon, the guiding principle should be: "The power of truthfulness." The desire to be original—which so persistently haunts the mind—must be altogether discarded, and every effort made to be thoroughly and completely truthful. There must be truthfulness in the method adopted for the treatment of the text; it should be used in its real meaning, rather than in any ingenious but accommodated sense. It should be so expounded as to reveal its own inner meaning, and not forced to buttress truth foreign to itself. The sermon should be true in relation to the people,

and should not merely reiterate phrases with which they are satisfied and pleased. And it should also be in true relation with the preacher's personality—the outcome of his own experiences and convictions. There should be the ring of truth in every sentence it contains. And, finally, it must be baptized in prayer. “If we allow our work to drop earthward, it will vanish in profitless mist; but if we lift it upwards in prayer, it will rise to the throne of God. He will touch it with His inspiration; and filled with His power it will descend in refreshing rain upon the thirsty hearts of men.”

3. *The Preacher in relation to his Age, and his Aim.*—Under these heads Bishop Carpenter gives us many wise and pertinent counsels. Here it is only necessary to give the briefest summary. The preacher must recognise that he is the child of his age, and resolve that he will not be its slave. He must live in its atmosphere, and therefore should endeavour to learn its language and understand its spirit. To perform his duty, which is to be done to-day, he must know something of the conditions in which he labours. And his knowledge must come, not merely from books, museums, etc., valuable as these are, but from a close contact with the people themselves. Only thus will he be able to speak a language which they understand; to come into vital relation with their modes of thought; or be able to apply to the ever-changing conditions of their life those changeless truths which are of the very essence of the gospel. With this knowledge, and with the help afforded by a confident reliance on the fatherly love of God, the preacher will be able to speak honestly and fear-

lessly the truth he has learned and knows, and "by manifestation of the truth will commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Bishop Carpenter has published several volumes of sermons; and one or two specimens of his style will do more than any description to show how carefully his own outlines are made, and how skilfully he can illustrate his points from history and also from common objects of daily life.

MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH.—EX. III. 3

"In the vision is the revelation which restored Moses to faith and to energy. The revelation, if I mistake not, was threefold—

"1. It was a revelation of permanence. Moses was suffering from that which is a common experience of life—he was exposed to the temptation to cry, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.' Everything had slipped from his grasp. . . . But in the unconsumed bush there was an element of permanence.

"2. It was a revelation of purity. Permanence is not to be found in material things, but in purity. He is reminded by the leprous hand that the cause of his failure lay not in the want of high purpose, but in the lack of pure methods.

"3. It was a revelation of personal power. Behind the purity is a personal God. And this God—who sends him forth—is a God of infinite power and strength.

"The same lessons come to us in these later days, and will lead us, if we learn them, to worthy achievement."

THE ASSURANCE OF JUDGMENT.—ACTS XVII. 31

“St. Paul bases his assurance of judgment on the reality of the resurrection of Christ. This does two things—

“1. It gives emphasis to the righteousness of God.

“2. It gives emphasis to the responsibility of man.

“On these two the judgment to come may be said to hinge.”

THE CHRISTIAN AS “LIGHT” AND “SALT”

“The influence of light is clear, unmistakable; it displays itself by its own light; it can be seen and observed. The influence of salt is more subtle. It spreads unseen. It does not reveal itself to the eye. It makes its presence known by mingling unseen in other substances. Its glory is that we rather note its absence than observe its presence. Its function is, without obtruding itself, to make food pleasant and palatable. It thus becomes the fitting emblem of that unconscious influence which is rather of character than of opinion. As light represents the distinct, vigorous, and conscious influence of the intellect, and of the will in active agency; so salt represents that quiet, unspoken, felt, but unobserved influence which disposition or character can exercise.”

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

“Saul of Tarsus was as impetuous in hostility to truth as any zealot of modern days. Augustine had as ardent a nature and as wild and uncurbed passions

as any of you. John Newton was as reckless of right and as careless of God as any here. Read the list of the worthies of the faith, the heroes of holiness—Polycarp, Ignatius, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Tauler, Bernard, Wesley, Simeon, Martyn, Patterson: they were men of like passions with ourselves. In them the victory of a risen Christ was won; in you, too, it may be achieved. . . . Dismiss the philosophy of despondency. Adopt the old oracle of the saints: *Sursum corda*. The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

THE SCRUPLES OF UNSCRUPULOUS MEN

"The scruples of unscrupulous men are among the marvels of the history of morals. Bishop Odo so far honours the precept that the priest should shed no blood, that he will carry no sword to the battle, but he has no hesitation about arming himself with the murderous mace to brain his foes. The Pharisee draws the line of right and wrong in matters of mint and anise and cummin, but the weightier matters of judgment and righteousness find no response in his conscience. There is a scrupulousness which is a sure sign of moral deterioration; for it is the mockery of conscientiousness. The demoralisation of Pilate was complete when he washed his hands."

FANATICISM OR RIGHTEOUSNESS

"It may be paradox, but it is true, that a man who holds mistaken views and suffers for his honesty

may be truly a sufferer for righteousness' sake, while the most scrupulous orthodoxy may miss the benediction. The ethical attitude of the man may be right while his opinions may be wrong, and the ethical attitude of orthodoxy may be wholly unrighteous. Dr. Döllinger pointed out that the want of justice was called by men fanaticism, and that there have been times when the best of men have acted fanatically—*i.e.* without justice. When Philip Augustus robbed and exiled the Jews, the Pope declared that he had acted out of godly zeal. Even holy Ambrose 'pronounced the burning of a synagogue in Rome to be a deed well-pleasing to God.' In the view of Christ the benediction falls on those whose hearts are set on righteousness. In the quarrels and persecutions which have been waged in the name of religion the blessing of Christ must often have fallen, not on those who were most stalwart for true opinions, but on the man, mistaken yet honest in his error, who would not pretend a faith which was not his, nor make his judgment blind. In this he must be truthful. Truthfulness is justice to conviction. It is better to be honestly wrong than dishonestly right; for then the man is right, though his views may be wrong. It is best of all to be both right and honest; but it is indispensable that a man be honest."

IV

DR. R. W. DALE, OF BIRMINGHAM

He has his arena down at Birmingham, where he does his practice with Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings and the rest of his band ; and then from time to time he comes up to the Metropolis, to London, and gives a public exhibition of his skill. And a very powerful exhibition it often is.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

DR. R. W. DALE was the successful pastor of a large church, a profound, evangelical, and liberal-minded theologian, and also one of the ablest of the Yale Lecturers on Preaching. We may therefore be sure that he has something to teach us respecting methods of pulpit preparation, and the most effective way of sermon-making. Happily, we have a fund of information at our disposal in his published *Lectures*¹ and other utterances, and, taking these as our guide, we shall endeavour to describe the methods which he commends to the youthful student as the outcome of his own ripe experiences.

As a lecturer on preaching, Dr. Dale had almost unexampled qualifications. His experience had been rich and varied, and far removed from the commonplace routine of the ordinary preacher. He was brought up in London under the ministry of Dr. John Campbell, one of the foremost Dissenting

¹ *Nine Lectures on Preaching.* By R. W. Dale. Hodder & Stoughton.

ministers of his time; took his degree of M.A. at the London University, with the gold medal in philosophy; and then studied theology at Springhill College, Birmingham, under Henry Rogers. At this time John Angell James was exercising great and widespread influence in that town, and took a deep interest in the young ministerial students. Mr. Dale was thus brought under his notice, and the intercourse then begun eventually issued in his being selected as Mr. James' colleague and assistant. In 1858, after Mr. James' death, Mr. Dale was offered, and accepted, the sole pastorate of the Carr's Lane Church—a charge which he held until his death, in 1895.

Our object in this paper, however, is not biographical, but rather to trace and present in the words of Dr. Dale himself, and in as few words as possible, "those practical suggestions with regard to the work of the Christian preacher which have been verified by his own experience and observation."

In the outset, Dr. Dale strongly and emphatically recommends *careful mental and intellectual preparation*. He does not believe in making the path to the pulpit an easy one, but holds the sensible creed that before a man commences to deliver his message he should have a message to deliver. "Impatience is not zeal. . . . Self-conceit and intellectual indolence may sometimes disguise themselves under the form of eagerness to be preaching the gospel of Christ." The preacher is Christ's servant, and should devote himself and all his powers to the faithful accomplishment of his Master's work. He will therefore be willing to subject himself to any

necessary training and discipline. This training should be twofold in its character—"Throughout life it is a wise practice to have always on hand two very different kinds of intellectual work — work which is a pleasure to us, for in that direction probably our true strength lies; and work which is a trouble to us, for by *that* our intellectual defects will probably be modified and corrected. . . . For purposes of intellectual discipline, a study which repels you is invaluable." All the preacher's studies should have for their end—knowledge—knowledge of the truth which he wishes to impress upon others. He will be anxious, not so much to confute error, as to proclaim the truth; and, recognising that he is God's ambassador to men, he will seek to know the *truth of God*, and will endeavour so to preach that his message shall bring "rest to the weary," the "inspiration of moral strength to the weak," "relief from the consciousness of guilt to the penitent," and "guidance to the soul that is athirst for the living God."

In order to do this effectually, it will be necessary for the preacher to discipline well his own heart and spirit, so that he may have a keen appreciation of the kind of work he is called to do. "There are some ministers who think so much about their sermons that they never seem to think about their congregations. They have so intense an intellectual delight in the exposition and defence of religious truth, that they do not remember that their business is to teach, to impress, to convert the living men and women that listen to them." This latter is *the preacher's business*, and to perform it effectually

should be the supreme purpose of his life. "Preaching is an action." "A true sermon is meant to do something. It is not intended to be listened to merely." "We shall preach to no purpose unless we have a purpose in preaching."

Having found his message—the message which suits the needs of his audience, the preacher must faithfully use every faculty and power which he possesses for *the effective presentation* of the truth. "There is no power of the intellect, no passion of the heart, no learning, no natural genius, that should not be compelled to take part in this noble service." And for this reason—that the preacher may compel his hearers to listen to his message. Mr. Dale quotes Emerson with evident approval—"Eloquence must be attractive. The virtue of books is to be readable, and of orators to be interesting." He is no believer in the maxim that "dulness is necessary to dignity," but maintains that it is *the preacher's business* to make his sermon so interesting that the people shall be unable to think of anything else during its delivery.

A careful study of Dr. Dale's sermons will reveal how closely he has followed, and how carefully he has practised, the advice thus given. One feels sure that Dr. Dale is not troubled with sleepy audiences. The student will note in reading, *e.g.*, the *Week-day Sermons*, the evidence they give of the preacher's close observation of the facts of everyday life; his ability to turn to account passing events, and to illustrate his point by some event from contemporaneous history, or by a reference to the world of art or literature. Take one or two

quotations: "It is my habit to read the reports of bankruptcy cases and of the winding-up of public companies; and the inner pages of a daily paper seem to me much better reading generally than the articles in large type. The more I read, the more plain it seems to me that people go wrong almost as much from want of sense as from want of honesty."

. . . "We have had a *Comic History of England* in our time—a frightful indication of the extent to which the very idea of the sacredness of our national life has perished. . . . There are some men, I am told, who, when they come home after a month's absence, seem to have forgotten everything about it, except the bills they have paid, the dinners they have eaten, the wines they have drunk, and, if they have been abroad, the strange customs of the countries they have visited."

Further, the preacher must acquire ease and facility in stating and expounding religious truth. He must not make the mistake of supposing that because a truth is fairly well known to himself, he can easily make it clear to others: because the "power of exposition is in reality a difficult one for most men to acquire." Mr. Dale disclaims the power of teaching men *how* to acquire this faculty, but insists that the root of it "lies in honest intellectual habits," in being "sure you know what you think you know." Here the lecturer is in harmony with other great teachers, and his advice is on the same lines as that given by Professor Huxley to would-be authors¹—

"I have always turned a deaf ear to the common

¹ *The Art of Authorship*. Edited by G. Bainton.

advice to 'study good models,' to 'give your days and nights to the study of Addison,' and so on. Buffon said that a man's style is his very self; and in my judgment it ought to be so. The business of a young writer is not to ape Addison or Defoe, Hobbes or Gibbon, but to make his style himself, as they made their styles themselves. They were great writers,—in the first place, because, by dint of learning and thinking, they had acquired clear and vivid conceptions about one or other of the many aspects of men or things. In the second place, because they took infinite pains to embody these conceptions in language exactly adapted to convey them to other minds. In the third place, because they possessed that purely artistic sense of rhythm and proportion which enabled them to add grace to force, and, while loyal to truth, make exactness subservient to beauty. . . . If there is any merit in my English now, it is due to the fact that I have by degrees become awake to the importance of the three conditions of good writing which I have mentioned. I have learned to spare no labour upon the process of acquiring clear ideas—to think nothing of writing a page four or five times over if nothing less will bring the words which express all that I mean, and nothing more than I mean; and to regard rhetorical verbosity as the deadliest and most degrading of literary sins."

In the next place, Dr. Dale insists that the preacher must keep his logical faculty bright and clear, and see that "every subject on which he intends to speak is in his complete possession *as a whole*, and not merely in its various parts." As to

the accomplishment of the first of these, he advises that in reading great books the student should endeavour to test the strength of the argument as he passes on, and not allow himself "to drift passively down the stream of any man's logic." He should force himself to follow the author's reasoning step by step, and to challenge every conclusion until he is sure that the position taken up is sound, and the steps of the argument valid and accurate. In relation to the second, the "habit and faculty may be strengthened by patient and honest reading. Before beginning a book it is well to look carefully through the table of contents, and to learn all that we can about the general design of the author, the method he has followed, the relations between the various topics he has discussed, and the various arguments on which he has relied. After finishing the book we should repeat the process. We should look at the book as a whole and piece together all its parts."

THE PREACHER'S READING should be *thorough*. Dr. Dale quotes Lord Lytton—"Reading without purpose is sauntering, not exercise. More is got from one book on which the thought settles for a definite end in knowledge, than from libraries skimmed over by a wandering eye." His own advice is to *read great books*—to spend one's strength in studying those books into which the authors have put the strength of their intellect; and while reading to make notes, and "discuss in your notes the author's arguments and criticise his theories," so as to obtain a "complete mastery of his position." He also advocates the *study of sermons*. Just as an art student studies the masterpieces of the great painters,

so that by a thorough knowledge of their productions he may gain some knowledge of the principles of their art; so the preacher should make a careful study of the sermons of the most successful preachers, ancient and modern. His purpose should be not so much the discovery of suggestive thoughts, but rather to *observe the methods* of these "masters of pulpit eloquence";—to note their texts and subjects, their methods of division and illustration, and the manner in which the subject is applied to the hearts and consciences of the hearers. This may seem to be advice beyond the powers and opportunities of men of scanty leisure; but it is really effective counsel even for them; for, as Lord Lytton has said, "The man who has acquired the habit of study, though for only one hour every day in the year, and keeps to the one thing studied till it is mastered, will be startled to see the way he has made at the end of a twelvemonth."

Dr. Dale's advice respecting the DIRECT PREPARATION OF SERMONS is extremely valuable. He suggests, first, that the preacher must read the Bible closely and continuously, not only to become familiar with its contents, but to "accumulate material for preaching." This Bible study should be carried on in the most systematic manner, and with the aid of all the helps to interpretation which the preacher possesses. He should remember that "the substance of our preaching has been given to us in a Divine revelation," and that "the Bible is not merely a book of texts, but a text-book." He should read with notebook at hand, and transfer to it anything he meets with that promises to be of use for sermon-

making, whether from the Bible or from other literature. A few sparkling sentences culled from such sources will often be exactly what is needed to give force and illustration to one's argument. That Mr. Dale has a keen eye for such pungent phrases, readers of his sermons will readily allow. We give one or two specimens from the *Week-day Sermons*.

"The tongue of a busybody," says Bishop Hall, "is like the tail of Samson's foxes; carries firebrands, and is enough to set the whole field of the world in a flame."

"Though silence," says Jeremy Taylor, "be harmless as a rose's breath to a distant passenger, yet it is rather the state of death than life. . . . By voices and homilies, by questions and answers, by narratives and invectives, by counsel and reproof, by praises and hymns, by prayers and glorifications, we serve God's glory and the necessities of men; and by the tongue, our tables are made to differ from mangers, our cities from deserts, our churches from herds of beasts and flocks of sheep."

In the *choice of topics for sermons*, the preacher should select those which have a strong moral and religious interest—subjects which will stir the hearts of men, and bring most forcefully under their notice the great duties and hopes of life. The *text* should be chosen not to display his cleverness and ingenuity, but to enable him to present, expound, and enforce the truth of God. On another point many will differ from our author's judgment,—when he counsels the avoidance of the most sublimely grand and majestic passages of Scripture as *texts*, and suggests that

other and less poetic statements should be chosen for the starting-point, thus leaving the grander texts free to contribute their majesty and splendour to the substance of the discourse. Probably the experienced speaker will most fully appreciate the wisdom of this advice. But it must not be forgotten that sometimes the preacher will most readily gain the attention of his audience by the selection of a startlingly effective text, although it should also be kept in mind that only a genius is likely to maintain throughout the discourse the interest thus created.

The *plan* of the sermon should take its form from the aim and purpose of the preacher in that particular discourse; and this will also largely determine the special preparation needed. The *accumulation of materials* should precede the making of the "plan" — "The *plan* of a sermon is the order in which the materials are arranged, and it seems to me that the reasonable method is to arrange the materials when you have got them to arrange—not before." The preacher should be careful to *avoid monotony*, by varying the structure of his sermons, and taking care not to build them always on the same lines or on similar framework.

When the materials are gathered together, their fitness for the work assigned to them should be carefully tested. Will the sermon "contain an adequate amount of Christian truth? or is it likely to secure any of the great ends for which the Christian ministry was established?" These are questions to which the true preacher will give much and careful thought. If he is to acquit himself of his duty to the congregation to which he ministers, he must

endeavour not only to suit his message to their needs, but at the same time to "declare all the counsel of God." A friend of the present writer's—himself a successful preacher—lays it down as a rule, never to be departed from, that every sermon should contain enough gospel truth to lead a sinner to Christ, even if he never has another opportunity of hearing the message of God's love. This was also Mr. Spurgeon's rule.

In addition to guarding well this point, the wise preacher will, at stated and frequently recurring times, bring definitely before his people the great facts which underlie the Christian history and faith. The festivals of the Christian year may thus be turned to great advantage, as, by following the suggestions which these "remembrance days" will bring to his mind, he will be able to keep the grand foundation truths of Christianity prominently before his congregation, and his preaching will be in some measure "according to the proportion of faith." He must never forget that he is called to publish, "as far as in him lieth," the full circle of gospel truth.

The INTRODUCTION should be brief, pointed, and natural, and as much strength as possible should be spent upon the APPLICATION. It is not enough merely to state the truth, and then leave it "to do its own work," to "trust to the hearts and consciences of our hearers to *apply* it." This is a fatal mistake. It means spending a long time in "getting our guns into position," and finishing "without firing a shot"! Our aim must always be similar to that of the apostles—to *persuade men*, and to persuade them to definite and immediate action. For this purpose

all the genius and originality which the preacher possesses may be summoned to his aid.

Dr. Dale was a warm advocate of extemporaneous preaching; but was careful to explain that by this he did not mean choosing a text on the way to the pulpit, and saying the first thing that comes; but, that careful and exact preparation which provides a man with "what he is going to say," but not with the words in which he will clothe his thoughts. He modified this statement, however, in a later paragraph—"If you have an illustration which requires perfection of form, you may write it out carefully and commit it to memory. You may also prepare a few keen, epigrammatic, or passionate sentences, in which to concentrate the effect of extemporaneous passages which lead up to them. I believe that Plunket, one of the greatest of our orators, was accustomed to prepare his speeches in this way. It is generally understood that on great occasions Mr. Bright followed the same method." To be successful as an extempore speaker, one needs to be well versed in the English language in all its strength and beauty; to have a mind stored with great and majestic thoughts; and to hold these thoughts with a firm mental grip.

We have said enough to indicate the helpfulness of Dr. Dale's counsel, although we have by no means exhausted the valuable advice given in the excellent lectures which we have taken as our guide. We can only say, in conclusion, that Dr. Dale firmly believed that the preacher should, above all, *proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ*. He "has not to receive a revelation from the new age in which we are living; he has

a revelation to deliver to it—a revelation from God.” And, in order that he may be faithful in his mission, he needs “a special gift of the Holy Ghost,” and “this gift he ought to seek in earnest prayer.” Are not these *the real and essential elements of every successful ministry?*

V

F. W. FARRAR, D.D., DEAN OF CANTERBURY

He is the best preacher who turns our ears into eyes.

—PERSIAN PROVERB.

THE Dean of Canterbury is one of the best known and most popular preachers possessed by the Church of England to-day. Gifted with a charming personality, possessing immense stores of easily available knowledge, and that earnest enthusiasm which constitutes so large a part of the orator's power, Dr. Farrar occupies an almost unrivalled position amongst modern preachers. Few men have that charm of cultured style which distinguishes his utterances, and fewer still speak with such intense conviction of the truth and reality of their message. This latter qualification is essential to pulpit success. "However highly gifted he may otherwise be, it is a valid objection to a preacher that he does not feel what he says,—that spoils more than his oratory. An obscure man rose up to address the French Convention. At the close of his oration, Mirabeau, the giant genius of the Revolution, turned round to his neighbour and eagerly asked, 'Who is that?' The other, who had

been in no way interested by the address, wondered at Mirabeau's curiosity. Whereupon the latter said, 'That man will yet act a great part'; and, asked to explain himself, added, 'He speaks as one who believes every word he says.' Much of pulpit power under God depends on that—admits of that explanation, or one allied to it. They make others feel who feel themselves."¹

Dean Farrar has nearly all of the elements of a popular style: he is bold, vigorous, courageous in his utterances; his sermons are full of pointed and racy quotations, and sparkle with poetry and with allusions to literature; and, in addition, no one can listen to his fervid discourses without feeling his intense and deep-seated conviction of truth. Whether he preaches to schoolboys, to university students, or to statesmen and business men at St. Margaret's and Westminster Abbey, you find the same stirring exhortations, the same fearless denunciations of evil,—whatever may be the particular evil under notice at the moment,—and the same earnest trumpet-call to a nobler and better life.

There can be no doubt that the mental and literary training of *the man* has had a great deal to do with shaping the vigorous personality of *the preacher*, and that the sermon is what it is because of the qualities of the man behind the sermon. The Dean tells us² that he received his early education at King William's College, in the Isle of Man. During his stay there—books for boys being comparatively few in those days—he read a good deal

¹ *Dr. Guthrie.*

² *Books which have influenced me.*

of poetry. "Before I was fifteen I had learnt by heart Heber's *Palestine*, and Goldsmith's *Traveller* and *Deserted Village*, in school; and from frequently reading *The Parent's Anthology* over, when no other book was available, there were few poems in the collection with which I was not very familiar. I count this to have been a very great advantage. Our minds were made a picture-gallery of beautiful imagination, and perhaps, at least insensibly, the poets made us familiar with 'the great in conduct, and the pure in thought.'"

At sixteen he removed to King's College, where for three years he attended the lectures of F. D. Maurice, who exerted a strong influence on his mental and theological development. His reading at this time seems to have been mainly confined to history, theology, and poetry. Hooker's *Polity*, Butler's *Analogy*, Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, and the works of Shakespeare, Southey, and Wordsworth were carefully and diligently studied. During his university career he became acquainted with many of the chief works of classical antiquity, and with some of the greatest English prose writers, e.g. Burke, De Quincey, Jeremy Taylor, Tennyson, Ruskin, and Carlyle; and amongst the writers who have influenced him most he includes Dante, Milton, Coleridge, and Robert Browning.

But we must pass on to our particular topic—*Pulpit Preparation*. Unlike many of our popular preachers, Dean Farrar has not, so far as we are aware, either uttered or published any lectures or addresses on the subject of preaching. But *The Record* published a short paper from him on

"Sermon Preparation" in December 1894, and to that we are indebted for most of our information.

From this paper we learn that Dr. Farrar has a keen and vivid sense of the greatness of the preacher's task, and the burdensomeness of his responsibility. Believing that the great aim of the preacher should be to preach Christ, and so to preach Him that men may find life in His Name, he knows that "it is solely on God's aid that the preacher must rely." He sympathises with Canon Kingsley, who "used to say, with the slight stammer which often gave a charming emphasis to his sentences, 'Whenever I walk up the choir of Westminster Abbey to the pulpit I wish myself d-d-dead; and whenever I walk back I wish myself m-m-more dead,'" and dreads lest "any folly, any vanity, any ignorance, any uncharity of one's own should infect with alien influxes the pure river of the water of God, or lest the hungry sheep should look up and not be fed."

His own sermons are composed in a comparatively short time, three and a half hours being given as the average limit. Dr. Farrar does not recommend this swiftness of composition to others, but urges that no time is too long and no pains too great, if time be available and additional labour is likely to produce a better result. Sometimes, and especially to the practised writer and preacher, over-elaboration is a mistake, and defeats its own purpose. "If written *currente calamo* under the influence of some dominant thought or deep emotion, the sermon may leap like a spark from an anvil, and further pains might only envelop it in the white ashes of euphuism and conventionality."

The Dean's rules for choosing a text are extremely

simple, and, in the hands of a master like himself, highly effective.

“ Personally, I seldom hunt for a text. Some thought or subject is in my mind, and presents itself spontaneously. Sometimes it is suggested by a single text, sometimes it is not. When I write on one dominant theme I often select the most appropriate text afterwards. But if by any chance, when I have to write a sermon, I have no special text or subject in my mind, I have only to look at the Epistle and Gospel, or the Lessons, or the Psalms of the day, and then the only difficulty can be which text of several to choose. The Bible, if we read it rightly, becomes like Aaron’s pectoral, ‘ardent with gems oracular,’ over whose graven letters—as in the Rabbinic legend about the Urim and Thummim—glides the mystic light of heaven, and spells the letters into ever new meanings and messages. And then, when we have found one subject for a sermon, a little meditation soon shows it to be so inexhaustible in depth and riches that out of a single sermon there often naturally grow three or four more, which become necessary to complete the train of thought.”

This is well and strikingly put; but it does not profess to be, and we question if it is, an accurate description of the genesis of the most effective or the most instructive sermons. There is, of course, a vast difference between the homiletical rules of the text-book, and the adaptation of those rules in the production of a sermon by a skilful and practised orator. But we venture to think that the truest and most effective sermons are those which most literally

and emphatically *grow* out of some great text or paragraph which has completely captivated the mind of the preacher, and forced him to utter its message. And for beginners, and those who have not yet acquired the power which comes from long and constant practice, it is always the safest rule to let the sermon grow out of the text.

Some of Dean Farrar's sermons are admirable examples in this respect, and, although his divisions are not often so terse and clear-cut as those of Jay or Robertson, they are frequently very simple and natural. For example, in a sermon on Mic. vi. 6-8, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* etc., the divisions are as follows:—

"Many answers are given: 1. By *doing*—Will Levitical sacrifices suffice? 2. By *giving*—Shall I try to bribe God? 3. By *suffering*—By lacerating the heart with torture, etc. No; the true way of pleasing God is—4. By *being*—By being just, merciful, humble before Him."

Again, in a sermon on "The Conquest over Temptation"—1 Cor. x. 13—the divisions used spring most naturally from the text—

"1. St. Paul assumes the certainty of our encountering temptation, yet he teaches—2. You need not *fall*: not *one* of you need fall, for—3. God is faithful, and—4. He will lay no heavier burden on any one of us than we can carry well. There is always *the way* of escape from each separate temptation. Some methods may be pointed out—(a) Watchfulness over thoughts; (b) avoidance of danger; (c) overcome evil with good, kill wicked passion by religious passion; (d) prayer."

Dr. Farrar wisely recommends "the practice of occasionally preaching courses of sermons on separate books, and also single sermons on each book of the Bible as a whole. The leaves of the tree may be beautiful, but the forest is greater."

In his volume on *The Books of the New Testament* we have a capital illustration of the value of this kind of pulpit teaching. Few preachers, perhaps, in this busy age, can find the time necessary for the preparation of similar sermons, but there can be little doubt that the result of such teaching would be to spread a wider and fuller knowledge of the Scriptures among the members of our congregations.

Dr. Farrar's sermons abound in illustrations. One of his critics has said that "no one else has the whole popular literature of England at his finger ends, and no one else can use it so wisely and well." His power in this department is manifest on every page of his writings. Illustrations from history and biography, forceful and brilliant metaphors, and sparkling quotations from the poets of ancient and modern days, seem to crowd upon the preacher's tongue, demanding utterance. We venture to cull at random a few specimens of the Dean's fertility of illustration from the pages of one of his volumes, in the "Expositor's Bible Series"—

"If Jeroboam (II.) was as wise and great as he seemed to have been, he must have seen with his own eyes the ominous clouds on the far horizon, and the deep-seated corruption which was eating like a cancer into the heart of his people. Probably—like many another great sovereign—like Marcus Aurelius

when he noted the worthlessness of his son Commodus, like Charlemagne when he burst into tears at the sight of the ships of the Vikings—his thoughts were like those of the ancient and modern proverbs—‘When I am dead, let earth be mixed with fire.’”

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“So did the dynasty of the mighty Jehu expire like a torch blown out in stench and smoke.”

There is no strange handwriting on the wall,
Through all the midnight hum no threatening call,
Nor on the marble floor the stealthy fall
Of fatal footsteps. All is safe.—Thou fool,
The avenging deities are shod with wool!¹

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“It has often happened—as to Persia, when in B.C. 388 she dictated the Peace of Antalcidas, and to Papal Rome in the days of the Jubilee of 1300, and to Philip II. of Spain in the year of the Armada, and to Louis XIV. in 1667—that a nation has seemed to be at its zenith of pomp and power on the very eve of some tremendous catastrophe.”

Our author insists upon “illustrations” as one of the desirable ingredients of the sermon. He counsels further, that these shall spring “naturally and spontaneously from our own memory and the stores of our own reading.”

“Direct quotations from others” the Dean regards with little favour; he recognises how powerful the temptation sometimes is, but advises the preacher to use his privilege sparingly, and always to make his hearers understand that he is quoting. The sermon

¹ W. Allen Butler.

should never degenerate into a string of "Elegant Extracts," no matter how beautiful they may be, but should bear upon it the stamp of the preacher's own mind and heart.

Respecting the vexed questions of originality and plagiarism, Dr. Farrar says—

"It is, of course, a base and a wrong thing for any man to pass off as his own the unacknowledged thoughts and words of others; but, on the other hand, not one man in a generation is absolutely original. It may be said of preachers as the Elizabethan dramatist said of poets—

One poet is another's plagiary,
And he a third's, till they all end in Homer.

"We must be ready to seize suggestions from all quarters—

From Art, from Nature, from the Schools,
Let random influences glance
Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

"One thing, however, is essential. We must make every thought we utter our own, by re-thinking it; by passing it through the crucible of our own minds."

Little needs to be added to this putting of the matter. We must recognise that absolute originality is a great and exceedingly rare gift, and that we are not likely to be favoured with its possession.

We may, however, be permitted to re-mint the old thought, to find a new, fresh, and vigorous setting to the time-worn truth, and give it a new and forceful application to the changing circumstances of our own day.

In conclusion, we may point out that the Dean has strong and definite convictions respecting the aim and purpose of the preacher.

“What should be the main object of preaching? I answer, without hesitation, the instruction, the elevation, the salvation of human souls. Every true preacher is a preacher of righteousness. To discriminate, to understand, and to utter those truths which God has clearly manifested to ourselves, which He intends us to utter and to interpret to our brethren who are in the world; above all, to feel and to know, though it passes knowledge, the love of God in Christ; to feel and to know that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and to make others partake of this personal conviction,—that, I suppose, is the object of all sermons.”

And in order that this may be done with power and grace, with that varied attractiveness and spiritual force which commends the truth to the consciences of his hearers, the preacher will make himself familiar with God’s message to man, and with everything that will enable him to expound and illustrate that message with tenderness and vigour. He will regard “nature and art, and biography and history and literature, as great heaven-ordained teachers of mankind. They are books of God, which, the more wisely and humbly

we study them, become more and more fitted to explain and enforce and illustrate those messages of God which we read in Scripture, and those which He speaks to us, to every man, each in the deep of his own heart."

VI

THOMAS GUTHRIE, D.D.

He cometh to you with a tale which holds children from their play, and the old man from the chimney corner.—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

IF one were asked to describe the preaching of THOMAS GUTHRIE in the briefest manner possible, there is one word which would irresistibly come to our lips, and we should be constrained to say, it was *pictorial* preaching. He was of the same opinion himself. It is recorded that once, when he was visiting the studio of an artist, he ventured to criticise an unfinished picture, and to suggest some change in the method of treating the subject. The painter, with some little warmth, replied—"Dr. Guthrie, remember you are a preacher and not a painter." To this there was the instant response—"Beg your pardon, my good friend—I *am* a painter; only, I paint in words, while you use brush and colours." Some of the readers of his sermons may possibly think that he was sometimes the slave of this very faculty of illustration, and they may be ready to endorse the verdict of Bishop Wilberforce—"Eloquent—familiar—slipshod—some very good things—sheep on the other side of the glen—going in well-beaten tracts—Newton coming back from

another world and finding the people better educated." But they will still be obliged to confess that he was a popular and powerful preacher—one who possessed in large measure the power of getting at other people's hearts, and implanting the truth there.

It will be interesting and instructive for us to note the way in which so popular a speaker and preacher prepared his sermons and trained himself for his work. He had, of course,—being a Scotchman,—the benefit of a long and valuable training. For eight years he followed the ordinary college course; then attended the university two additional years before becoming a licentiate; and after this was five years waiting for a presentation to a vacant church. Those five years were spent in the most practical way—partly in Paris, studying medicine, etc.; partly in business as manager of the Brechin Bank agency. This long period of waiting was a keen disappointment to the young preacher, but the experience thus gained became in after-life of the greatest assistance to him in dealing with the burdens and temptations of business men.

From the first, Mr. Guthrie determined to *preach*, not read, so that he might have all the advantage which comes from looking an audience "fair in the face." However, he found it so difficult in those early attempts to remember his sermons that he began to despair, and said to himself, "I shall never succeed as a preacher!" In his first charge he found the task of preaching twice every Sunday to the same congregation too heavy a burden, so

he dispensed with the second preaching service, and substituted for it a service of his own invention. He formed a class for young men and women, and met them in the church for examination at a later hour, but in the presence of the congregation. "The subjects of examination were, first, one or two questions from the Larger Catechism . . .; second, the sermon or lecture delivered in the forenoon was gone over head by head, introduction and peroration, the various topics being set forth by illustrations, drawn from nature, the world, history, etc., of a kind that greatly interested the people, but such as would not always have suited the dignity and gravity of the pulpit." This service was eminently successful and popular; and we shall not be far wrong in seeing in it the beginning of that peculiarly illustrative style so characteristic of his published sermons.

Though Mr. Guthrie had the reputation of being a careful and diligent student, he made no claim to the possession of "scholarship" in the strict sense of the term. He was, during his college days, a great reader of general literature, and had a special liking for physical science. "The accuracy of his medical and scientific illustrations has been frequently remarked. One of his hearers said, 'In his logic you might often detect a flaw; in his illustrations, never.'" Writing to a friend, he says: "I was preaching in St. Andrew's Church on Sunday night, and have been greatly amused at two observations which were told me to-day,—the one by Catherine Burns, who was in the back seat of the gallery, and heard a man (in allusion to my nautical figures) say to his

neighbour before her, 'He is an old sailor; at least, he was a while at sea!' And Miss Gilfillan heard one say to another as he came down the stair, 'If he *stick* the minister trade, yon man would make his bread as a surgeon!'"

And his preaching *drew the people*, first in the country, and later in Edinburgh. One of his Arbirlot elders told a visitor that "after Maister Guthrie cam', the kirk was filled haigh up and laigh down. The folk would come miles and miles to hear him." . . . Did he use illustrations? "Lots o' illustrations frae the sea, and the earth, and the air, and onything that cam' handy. Illustrations extraordinar'! He was a ready-wittit man; . . . He never had to rummage long for a word."

One who knew Guthrie well has said that "there were two voices in nature above others he had listened to and learned. Wordsworth calls them the voices of liberty: the one of the sea, the other of the mountains." There was also another voice which he listened for,—*the voice of God in His word*,—and that was the source of his inspiration in preaching. His marvellous power of illustration "was always employed to set forth the grand old cardinal truths of the gospel." He believed in conscientious and thorough preparation for the pulpit. The oil he brought into the sanctuary was "beaten oil." He was a man possessed of the power of ready speech, and, as Dr. McCosh says, "could have extemporised a sermon at any time, and thus saved himself much labour. But, during all the seven years he was in Arbirlot, I

believe he never entered the pulpit without having his discourse written and committed. . . . I have found him on a Saturday night amending and correcting what he had written, and filling his mind with the subject."

Of his *methods of work* we have several pictures. His brother-in-law, the Rev. J. C. Burns, tells that when he was settled in Arbirlot he became a more devoted Bible student than he had been before, and prepared his discourses with great care. He purchased, immediately after he was presented to the living, the *Commentaries* of Scott and Henry, and other works, but made comparatively little use of them. His sermons were prepared with the aid of Cruden's *Concordance* and Chalmers' *Scripture References*. "He preferred Cruden and *himself* to them all—*i.e.* his own first and fresh impressions of the meaning of the passage he was expounding; and these he set himself to convey in the plainest and most familiar language, and in the most vivid and telling form; so that, while his exegesis might sometimes be at fault, and was always defective, he never failed both to get and keep the attention of his hearers, and to put them in possession of what he wished them to know."

His own account of his early endeavours is so graphic that we transcribe it in full, asking our readers to bear in mind that, whilst a student in divinity, Mr. Guthrie had paid great attention to the *art of elocution*, and had endeavoured to acquire as perfect a *manner of delivery* as was possible to him. He writes—

"When I went to Arbirlot I knew pretty well

how to speak sermons, but very little about how to compose them; so I set myself vigorously to study how to illustrate the great truths of the gospel, and enforce them, so that there should be no sleepers in the church, no wandering eyes, but everywhere an eager attention. Savingly to convert my hearers was not within my power; but to command their attention, to awaken their interest, to touch their feelings and instruct their minds, was,—and I determined to do it. With this end, I used the simplest, plainest terms, avoiding anything vulgar, but always, where possible, employing the Saxon tongue—the mother tongue of my hearers. I studied the style of the addresses which the ancient and inspired prophets delivered to the people of Israel, and saw how, differing from dry disquisitions or a naked statement of truths, they abounded in metaphors, figures, and illustrations. I turned to the Gospels, and found that He who knew what was in man, what could best illuminate a subject, win the attention, and move the heart, used parables or illustrations, stories, comparisons, drawn from the scenes of nature and familiar life, to a large extent in His teaching; in regard to which a woman—type of the masses—said, ‘The parts of the Bible I like best are the *likes*.’

“Taught by such models, and encouraged in my resolution by such authorities, I resolved to follow, though it should be at a vast distance, these ancient masters of the art of preaching; being all the more ready to do so, as it would be in harmony with the natural turn and bias

of my own mind. I was careful to observe by the faces of my hearers, and also by the account the more intelligent of my Sunday class gave of my discourses, the style and character of those parts which had made the deepest impression, that I might cultivate it.

"After my discourse was written, I spent hours in correcting it; latterly, always for that purpose keeping a blank page on my manuscript opposite a written one, cutting out dry bits, giving point to dull ones, making clear any obscurity, and narrative parts more graphic, throwing more pathos into appeals, and copying God in His works by adding the ornamental to the useful. The longer I have lived and composed, I have acted more and more according to the saying of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his *Lectures on Painting*, that God does not give excellence to men but as the reward of labour."

In exactly the same strain is the advice he gave to a young preacher: "An illustration or an example drawn from nature, a Bible story or any history, will, like a nail, often hang up a thing which otherwise would fall to the ground. . . . Mind 'the three P's.' In every discourse the preacher should aim at PROVING, PAINTING, and PERSUADING; in other words, addressing the Reason, the Fancy, and the Heart."

The success achieved by Mr. Guthrie was not reached without effort. For some years after coming to Edinburgh he rose at five o'clock, summer and winter. By six o'clock he was writing at his desk, remaining there till nine, the family breakfast

hour. By this means he secured some eighteen hours each week for the Sunday's sermon; and, keeping it "*simmering*" in his mind all the week through," was enabled to preach with "fulness, feeling, and power."

Such were the *methods* of this prince of Scottish preachers: the *results* of those methods are to be found in any of his published sermons. He may not be a perfect model; but many present-day congregations, in town and country, would be glad to find that the preacher who speaks to them could present the truth in a similarly attractive form. As Dr. John Ker beautifully says: "His sermons had not exhaustive divisions enclosing subjects, as hedges do fields, but outlines, such as clouds have, that grow up by electricity and air; or such as the breadths of fern and heather and woodland had on the hillside opposite his door, where colour melted into colour, with here a tall crag pointing skyward, and there an indignant torrent leaping headlong to come glittering out again among flowers and sunshine. Some tell us that analogy is a dangerous guide, and that metaphors prove nothing; but when they rest on the unity between God's world and man's nature they are arguments as well as illustrations." We may never become as powerful or as famous as Thomas Guthrie, but we may follow him in his reverent and loving study of Scripture, and in his endeavour so to set forth its truth that the people might realise its beauty and power. Of him we may venture perhaps to use words written of his Divine Master: "The common people heard him gladly." What preacher would covet a higher

eulogium on his own method of presenting the truth?

He spoke of lilies, vines, and corn,
The sparrow, and the raven,
And words so natural, yet so wise,
Were on man's heart engraven ;
And yeast, and bread, and flax, and cloth,
And eggs, and fish, and candles ;
See, how the whole familiar world
He most divinely handles.

THOS. T. LYNCH, *On the Parables of Christ.*

VII

DR. JOHN KER

As a rule, sermons by the best preachers of the last quarter of a century, of whatever party, will be found more helpful in reference to preaching than the ponderous and stately homilies of the third or sixth generation behind us.—DR. VAUGHAN.

ONE who knew Dr. Ker well, describes him as “a preacher of rare and manifold faculty, including keenness of intellect, a firm grasp of principles and their practical bearings; philosophic breadth, deep insight into the human heart, and sympathy with it in all its moods of joy or sorrow. To these must be added a fine poetic sense, coming in frequent gleams like a sudden flush of warmth and light, by which his words were illumined, but not weakened, for he never elaborated his images till they grew cold and formal.” He is further described as “a man of wide and genial humanity, whose conversation—which was one of his great powers, wonderful for its fulness of knowledge, its variety, and its fluency, with sparkles of wit and humour—constituted such a fascination as reminds one of what was said of Sir Philip Sidney: ‘He cometh to you with a tale, which holds children from their play, and the old man from the chimney corner.’”

After some years spent in the service of the United Presbyterian Church as pastor, first at Alnwick and later in Glasgow, he was in 1876 appointed to a Professorship in the Theological Hall of his Church, as the first occupant of the *Chair of Practical Training for the Work of the Ministry*—a position which he held until his death, in October 1886. During these ten years he had a large share in moulding the minds of successive generations of students, and by the force of his great personality was able to produce a lasting impression on the intellectual habits of the rising ministry.

Few of the many lectures he delivered during this period have been published; but his *History of Preaching* has gained a place of its own in Homiletic literature. Scattered through this book, and in his *Letters and Thoughts for Heart and Life*, we have sufficient information to guide us as to his own opinions on the importance of the preacher's work, and the best methods of performing it.

In Dr. Ker's view, the "great work of the Christian preacher is, not to be an orator but an interpreter, to teach the people how to read and use the word of God. He is a conveyance-pipe to draw the water from the fountain and pour it on grass and flowers to make them grow, also on consuming fires of sin to extinguish them." The true minister is one who "stands between God and man to bring them together," and to do this he must himself ever be drawing nearer to God. He must make it his constant effort to reveal Christ to men, in all the fulness and richness of His saving grace. He must preach Christ as the Son of God in heaven, as the

Resurrection and Eternal Hope, as the fountain of redemption and reconciliation; and also as the living helper of men in their daily struggles, as One who in His humanity is brought close to men as their Guide and Friend, always and everywhere. He must so fully reveal to men the helpful sympathy, the abiding life, and the redeeming power of the Saviour, that the temptation to rest in confessionals and spiritual directions, or to find refuge in ritualism and sacramentarianism, shall be absolutely removed from their path.

The preacher's PREPARATION OF HIMSELF for his appointed task should be as thorough and complete as it is possible for him to make it. He must pay particular attention to the cultivation of his intellect and the formation of sound mental habits; his character and bearing towards others should be such as to mark him out as a true Christian gentleman; and at the same time he must use all available helps for, and give all diligence to, the cultivation of his spiritual life, so as to make that the source and strength of all his public work.

His reading should be as wide as his circumstances and time allow, and he should always endeavour to turn the facts and thoughts thus gained to account in his work of preparing for the pulpit. Dr. Ker, however, in one of his letters speaks strongly of the profitlessness of reading many books: "The best thing, I think, is to have one's mind made up on the few great points about God and man that go to make life, and to read the few great books that deal with them, leaving the magazine men to pull one another to pieces as they like."

Further, the preacher must be a careful student of human nature—of the life and labours, of the thoughts and needs of the men and women about him. “Prince Maurice of Saxony speaks of ‘studying the human heart,’ that he might win his battles; and someone has said that psychology, the knowledge of minds and temperaments, is part of the art of war. This is still more true of the preacher who would gain souls.” He must remember that preaching has to do with the whole of man’s nature, and with every part of man’s life; and he must study not only to know the word of God, but how to bring its truth to bear upon every man’s heart, every man’s conscience and daily life. Dr. Ker quotes the words of Tholuck, “Every sermon should have heaven for its father, and earth for its mother”; and adds, “It is not needful that we should tell men about ploughing and bee-keeping, and gardening and weaving; but we can bring home to them the great rule, ‘Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’”

As to the *METHODS OF THE PREACHER*, Dr. Ker would find in the Bible not only the principle of true preaching, but materials and guiding lines. For him the New Testament is full of “definite suggestions of the highest value.” He counsels us to study especially the preaching of Christ and His apostles. The characteristics of Christ’s preaching are thus stated: “(1) There is great simplicity, and yet there is a never-fathomed depth; (2) there is great variety, and yet there is one constant aim; (3) there is great sympathy, and yet great faithfulness.” The different spheres of His preaching are also noted: Stated preaching, as in the synagogue, where He read, ex-

plained, and applied the Scripture ; occasional preaching, on the mountains, by the seashore, or wherever men gathered around Him ; and preaching to the individual, as when He spoke to single persons either in the house or by the way. This latter course "should still be included in our work, when we visit Christian families, and in the intercourse of life. It may seem like a paradox to say that we shall learn here not to preach at all. Notice how Christ does. He drops a saying, sometimes little more than a word : 'Go and sin no more' ; 'O thou of little faith' ; 'One thing is needful' ; and He sends them away with this, to think of it and to preach about it to themselves. See that you follow His example."

Apostolic preaching was of two kinds. "The one was 'missionary,' for bringing men to a knowledge of Christ ; the other was 'ministerial,' for building them up in the faith and in the practice of it. Both methods are still necessary, and in the same order. We have in our congregations children and many half-instructed people for whom full and adequate teaching respecting the life, work, death, and resurrection of Christ is absolutely required. And there are others who need to be led into the fulness and richness of the gospel blessings, who must be instructed in Christian doctrine, and its application to our manifold life."

In the lecture-room Dr. Ker gave considerable attention to the choice of subjects for sermons, and to the methods of treating texts—to what may be called practical sermon-building. He utterly condemns "sermons of the scholastic type, full of plays

upon words and ridiculous conceits." As an example, he gives the following outline of a sermon on the word "Jesus":—

"1. It is declined in three cases, Jesus, Jesum, Jesu; wherein we have manifestly an image of the Trinity.

"2. The first of these ends in *s*, the second in *m*, the third in *u*; which is a deep mystery—*sumum, medium, ultimum*.

"3. Further, if Jesus is divided into two equal portions, *s* is left in the middle, which in the Hebrew is *sin*, and this in the language of the Scots signifies *peccatum*; it is thus implied that Jesus takes away the sin of the world."

He also condemns the practice of certain preachers of the monastic orders who related "stories about saints and legends of the most trifling and irreverent kind," or amused their audience with ridiculous anecdotes and jests, and whose main object seemed to be to make the hearers laugh. Dr. Ker finds parallels to these in the modern question-of-the-day handler and in the sensational advertiser, and advises his students to find a more excellent way, by making it their business "to declare simply, faithfully, and earnestly the word of eternal life." He insists that the freshness and variety of our sermons can only be maintained by constant study and ready and untiring observation.

"Visiting a store for wall-papers, and seeing some of them very fresh and beautiful, I asked how and by whom they were designed. 'By the manufacturer himself,' was the answer. 'Whenever he travels he carries a little sketch-book, and when he sees any

flower that he thinks graceful he sketches it on the spot, and afterwards works it up.' . . . Is not this a hint for preachers, to be gathering fresh stores from life, and watching human nature, in order to bring everything to bear on one great end?"

Dr. Ker's practice was to prescribe texts and topics to his students, on which they were required to construct sermons or sermon-outlines, which would afterwards be discussed with the whole class. "Sometimes he would ask them to suggest divisions or plans on the spur of the moment, or after a quarter of an hour's reflection." Or he would require his students to go through the Gospels, to collect "the short prayers addressed to Christ, the questions put to Him, the questions He puts, etc., characterising them in some few words" that they might gain "skill in discerning the facets of the scattered diamonds." Some of the Professor's outlines prepared for the classroom are remarkably fresh and vigorous. He says: "It must have struck you how much interest is thrown into the Bible from looking at two clauses which stand sometimes in the way of analogy, sometimes of antithesis. I have been trying some of these for subjects."

"Prov. ii. 3, 4. Two requisites for gaining the true knowledge.

"i. Looking far up—cry, lift up thy voice. Observe how the longing cry becomes articulate, 'a voice.'

"ii. Looking close and near—like a man in a mine. Observe the growing intensity, seek, search. Prayer and exertion united.

"Amos vi. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 28. Read in their connection to see two characters found long ago and

now, the selfish and the self-renouncing. Sketch their circumstances, enjoyments, and the result. The result of their pleasure (see Amos vi. 7, 8); the result of St. Paul's care, which had a Godlike joy in its heart, in the Christian Church, and in the world; the end of consistent materialism and consistent Christianity."

Dr. Ker urges that the style of the sermon should be simple and sympathetic. The preacher should avoid all words and phrases which are merely academic and likely to act as "non-conductors," to keep him from getting to the hearts of his audience. His business is to *persuade* men, and he must use language which they understand. His topics are those which concern the personal welfare of every one of his hearers, and do not need "fine rounded phrases" to recommend them to the heart and conscience, but rather simple and living words. He illustrates this point by the following anecdote:—

"When Dante wrote the *Divina Commedia* in Italian, the language of the people was despised. 'Why,' said a monk to him, 'when thou art so learned, hast thou written such a work in the vulgar tongue?' 'It is,' said the poet, 'that all may know our hopes, and that the wife of the peasant may comprehend our faith.' Should not this be true of the style of preaching?"

In this connection, Luther's example is cited as worthy of imitation. He "addressed the moral and spiritual nature of his hearers with unmistakable meaning and directness." Feeling "that the best preacher is the man who is best acquainted with the Bible," he made it his business to have a thorough acquaintance with the word of God, and to set it

forth in homely language. "My best craft," he says, "is to give the Scriptures, with its plain meaning; for the plain meaning is learning and life."

The preacher should find the *main thought of the text*, and enforce that. If he tries to speak on everything, he will never reach the end. Such preachers he "compares to a maidservant going to market, who wastes her time in talking with this one and that one on the road, and arrives too late. We should impress the leading thought, and send away the people saying, 'The sermon was on such and such a point.'" Dr. Ker himself thinks that "the first formal excellence in a sermon is unity"; and that the cardinal sin of preaching is "wearisomeness," which often springs from want of unity in thought or aim. He believes that "the heart is made for the Bible, and the Bible for the heart"; and that the sermons of preachers of the evangelical school attract the largest audiences, and are the most widely read.

A careful study of Dr. Ker's lectures on Preaching in Germany would be helpful to all young preachers, and teach them much which they ought to know. Some of his ways of characterising faulty methods are original, and almost startling in their vivid power. "There are some preachers who cut down the tree of life, and deal it out in hard dry planks, sometimes even presenting hard knots and sawdust—abstract doctrines without sap or sympathy. Others give flowers from parasitical plants which they have attached to it, things which have no fruit and no healing leaves. The first is the deadly formal; the second, the equally deadly fanciful."

Finally, in order to preach well, much study will be necessary.

"If there is any enthusiast who thinks he will be able to preach by trusting simply to the inspiration of the Spirit, or any genius who thinks it will come to him by intuition, or any sluggard who is waiting for something to occur, he may be undeceived by reading the Pastoral Epistles of the Apostle Paul. The preacher may expect Divine help, but only in the use of all proper means. He is to stir up the gift that is in him; to give himself to reading and to meditation; to be nourished in the words of faith and sound doctrine; to make himself acquainted evermore with the Holy Scriptures, though he has learned them from a child; to distinguish all the relationships of life, so that he may touch them with discretion; and in all things to study to show himself approved unto God—'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' So, good preachers were made at first under apostolic guidance; and so, good preachers must be made to the end of the world. *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio.*"

VIII

DR. ALEXANDER MACLAREN

The river that makes glad the city of God must, in right preaching, be sometimes full, like Jordan when it overflows its banks, and sometimes tender like the rivers of Babylon, on the willows of which the harps of the exiles were hung.—DR. JOHN KER.

DR. MACLAREN is by common consent recognised as one of the foremost preachers of the nineteenth century; and in many respects he is, perhaps, the greatest of them all. He possesses in an eminent degree the true expository genius, the power of vivid and glowing illustration, a fervent and established faith joined to wide and generous culture, and an attractive and fascinating style. Keenly alive to and fully abreast of all the intellectual questions of the day, he is singularly free from any taint of modern scepticism; confident and undismayed in presence of its loud-voiced materialism. He is a truly *great* preacher, and his sermons always demand careful attention; hence his methods are worthy of study by everyone who is called to declare the truth of God to the hearts and consciences of the men and women of this nineteenth century.

It is with some diffidence that we make an attempt to describe his methods. Although Dr. Maclaren

has been in great request as a speaker to students for the ministry, he has published little which has any direct relation to pulpit preparation; and very little of the sound advice so frequently uttered by him to students has found its way into the public press. We shall have to carefully study his published sermons, and, if possible, infer from these fruits of his genius the methods by which they are produced. This plan will have many disadvantages; but it will be very instructive to search for those evidences of the methods of preparation which come into prominence in the finished sermon.

Alexander Maclaren devoted himself to the service of God in his early youth, and was publicly baptized when only thirteen years of age. He was educated at the Glasgow High School, and University, and at the age of sixteen entered Stepney College as a student for the Baptist ministry. He took his B.A. degree at London University before he was twenty, and in the following year commenced his ministry at Portland Chapel, Southampton. Here he was face to face with a bit of hard, discouraging work, but his earnest and fervent labours soon wrought a marvellous change; and, after twelve years of successful toil, he was widely known as an attractive and powerful preacher. At this time he received and accepted an invitation to the pastorate of Union Chapel, Manchester, and his splendid achievements there have given him a world-wide reputation.

Those of our readers who have not had the privilege of hearing Dr. Maclaren will be glad to read Dr. Cuyler's description of him. In an article

contributed to the *Treasury* a short time ago he says—

“Maclaren wears no ‘Geneva gown,’ and not even a clerical white necktie. He does not look old for a man of five-and-sixty (the date is 1889); his face is thin and sharp; he has an eye like a hawk; his iron-grey hair is brushed back from an ample forehead; and even long study has not brought him to the need of using his glasses. So superbly intellectual a head I did not see in England after William E. Gladstone’s. . . . Of course we ‘forgathered’ at once in his study, which is about the only place where two parsons can stretch their legs at ease and get into each other’s true inwardness. My friend’s study was well lined with books, and the only two portraits on the walls were those of Tennyson and Thomas Carlyle. He told me that Carlyle was his delight, and an endless quickener of thought: ‘No man of our times stirs me like him.’”

Dr. Cuyler attended the service at Union Chapel on the Sunday morning following this interview: Dr. Maclaren “read two lessons of Scripture, offered two most fervent and beautiful prayers, and gave out four hymns from a book of his own compilation, which were sung ‘with a will.’ He then announced his text from the fourteenth chapter of John, . . . and for forty minutes, without a line of manuscript, he poured forth a bright, pure, clear stream of devout and quickening thought, like one of the crystal rivulets of his own Scottish Highlands. . . . He never preaches but once on the Sabbath, and into that single sermon he puts his whole concentrated strength.”

But our main business in this paper is not so

much to describe the personality of the preacher, as to try and discover what we can of his methods of sermon-making. The best possible preface to any remarks of our own will be the following letter, received from Dr. Maclaren a few years ago, when we were collecting materials for this series of papers. He says—

“I have really nothing to say about my way of making sermons that could profit your readers. I know no method, except to think about a text until you have something to say about it, and then to go and say it, with as little thought of self as possible.”

Have we not here the secret of success in preaching put into the fewest and simplest words possible? The advice thus formulated touches those primary elements which must necessarily be found in all successful preaching, namely, careful preparation, a distinct and definite message, and the forceful delivery of the same. Readers of Dr. Maclaren's sermons will soon discover that he has not himself spared the process of thought; that he has unmistakably something to say; and that he is more desirous to utter his message than to obtrude his own personality on the hearer. Here, at least, the reader will find nothing to cause him to suspect the preacher of self-exaltation.

Before a preacher begins to build any particular sermon, or to “think about a text,” it is necessary first to *find the text*. The start will be all the easier, and the sermon all the more forceful, if the text has *found* the preacher; if it has gripped his

soul with such a sure grasp that he is absolutely unable to shake off the impression it has made upon him, until he has delivered its message with all the power at his command. There is no surer way of discovering these "master texts" than a careful and systematic study of the Scriptures; and there can be no doubt that this has always been Dr. Maclaren's practice. We have been told on good authority that it has been his habit for many years to read a chapter of the Hebrew Bible and one from the Greek Testament every day. Speaking at a meeting in Manchester some time ago he said, "A minister who does not live a great deal alone, a great deal with God, and in study of God's word, is not worth much, as his teaching will soon lose that freshness and power which alone comes from communion with God." The fruits of such careful and concentrated study on his own part may be seen in any volume of his published sermons; and more particularly, perhaps, in *The Holy of Holies*, the *Epistle to the Colossians*, and the *Life of David as reflected in the Psalms*. This habit will also help to explain his faculty for finding truth in unexpected places. He has "explored" the Bible, and can therefore bring from his treasury "things new and old." What marvellous illustrations of this are to be found, *e.g.*, in his *Week-day Evening Addresses*:—Lev. xxvi. 10—"The Old Store and the New"; Ezra viii. 22, 23, 31, 32—"Heroic Faith"; Ps. lix. 9, 17—"Waiting and Singing"; "Mnason, the Old Disciple"; "Quartus, a Brother," etc.

Having thus secured the text, the next business of the preacher is to "*think about it* until he has

something to say." It is, of course, taken for granted that the sermon-builder will use all legitimate "aids to thought." There is a story told in this connection which illustrates exactly "how not to do it." Dr. Maclaren is reported to have told a certain group of students that "he made his sermons on his back, looking at a sheet of paper with the text written on it." The result was that soon afterwards some of these students were to be seen lying on their backs, and gazing at a sheet of note-paper,—"but no inspiration came!" We are not surprised; the wonder is that anyone ever expected *inspiration* to follow such a process. Thinking about a text implies, first of all, hard work with the Lexicon and Concordance. The text must be closely interrogated and analysed, and made to render up its deepest meaning. In Dr. Maclaren's own words: "A minute study of the mere words of Scripture, though it may seem like grammatical trifling and pedantry, yields large results. Men do sometimes gather grapes of thorns; and the hard, dry work of trying to get at the precise shade of meaning in Scripture words always repays with large lessons and impulses."¹ We give a few quotations from Dr. Maclaren's volumes.

PS. LVI. 3, 4

"*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.*" Scholars tell us that the word here translated 'trust' has a graphic, pictorial meaning for its root idea. It signifies literally to cling to or hold fast anything,

¹ Some admirable examples of the results of such study will also be found in Bishop Lightfoot's *Ordination Addresses*.

expressing thus both the notion of a good tight grip and of intimate union. Now, is not that metaphor vivid and full of teaching as well as of impulse? . . . We may follow out the metaphor of the word in many illustrations. For instance, here is a strong prop, and here is the trailing, lithe feebleness of the vine. Gather up the leaves that are creeping all along the ground, and coil them around that support, and up they go straight towards the heavens. Here is a limpet in some pond or other, left by the tide, and it has relaxed its grasp a little. Touch it with your finger and it grips fast to the rock, and you will want a hammer before you can dislodge it."

PS. LIX. 9, 17

"*Because of His strength will I wait upon Thee.* . . . I must notice that the expression here, 'I will wait,' is a somewhat remarkable one. It means, accurately, 'I will watch Thee,' and it is the word that is generally employed, not about our looking up to Him, but about His looking down to us. It would describe the action of a shepherd guarding his flock; of a sentry keeping a city; of the watchers that watch for the morning, and the like. . . . These two things—vigilance and patience—are the main elements in the scriptural idea of waiting on God."

COL. II. 8

"*That maketh spoil of you.* Such is the full meaning of the word—and not 'injure' or 'rob,' which the translation in the Authorized Version suggests to an English reader. Paul sees the converts in Colossæ taken prisoners and led away with

a cord round their necks, like the long strings of captives on the Assyrian monuments."

Such passages as these—and there are many of them—suffice to show that a wise use of the student's reference-books will help him greatly in his work of sermon-making.

The preacher is to think about his text until he has *something to say* about it. He must never be content merely to *say something*, but must find the real message of his text, and then use all the powers of his intellect and imagination to give to the message a living and perfect form. His aim should be to apply the truth of the word to the everyday needs, perplexities, sorrows, and sins of his congregation. The two things most helpful to him in this work (next to the power and unction of the Holy Spirit) will be a wide knowledge of human life, and a cultivated imagination. Dr. Maclaren's sermons reveal how admirably he has solved the problem of finding not only something, but the right thing—to *say*. One or two matters of detail may be noted.

He has a wide and accurate knowledge of human nature, and knows not merely its weaknesses and failings, but its great capacities and possibilities. He is thus enabled to speak to the heart, and press home the abiding claims of the revelation of Jesus. He is not satisfied with a mere presentation of the truth, but seeks by its means to rouse the inert conscience and to quicken the dead soul.

"The whole meaning of the death of Christ is not reached when it is regarded as the great propitiation for our sins. Is it the pattern for our lives? has

it drawn us away from our love of the world, from our sinful self, from the temptations to sin, from cowering before duties which we hate but dare not neglect? has it changed the current of our lives, and lifted us into a new region where we find new interests, loves, and aims, before which the twinkling lights, which once were stars to us, pale their ineffectual fires? If so, then, just in as much as it is so, and not one hair's-breadth the more, may we call ourselves Christians. If not, it is of no use for us to talk about looking to the cross as the source of our salvation."

"No asceticisms and no resolves will do what we want. Much repression may be effected by sheer force of will, but it is like a man holding a wolf by the jaws. The arms begin to ache and the grip to grow slack, and he feels his strength going, and knows that, as soon as he lets go, the brute will fly at his throat. Repression is not taming. Nothing tames the wild beast in us but the power of Christ. He binds it in a silken leash, and that gentle constraint is strong because the fierceness is gone."

In this connection it is impossible to overlook the felicitous and sparkling *illustrations* which characterise all Dr. Maclaren's writings and utterances. In finding "something to say" he brings into requisition all the stores of a cultivated intellect and the rich treasures of a retentive memory. Every page is illuminated with exquisite analogies and the most apt illustrations. Every thought sparkles and flashes with the light which is thus thrown upon it. And so numerous are these gems that a large "*Treasury of Illustration*" might be

compiled from his writings alone. We have only space for two or three examples; but every reader can easily test this matter for himself.

"The grace that is coming to you has started on its road. It is being borne towards you as by a flight of angels down through the blue. And is that not so? Does not every tick of the clock bring it nearer? Does not each moment that passes thin away the veil; and will it not be dissipated altogether soon? The light that set out from the sun centuries ago has not reached some of the stars yet, but it is on the road. And the grace that is to be given to us has started from the throne, and it will be here presently."

"You and I write our lives as if on one of those manifold writers which you use. A thin filmy sheet *here*, a bit of black paper below it; but the writing goes through upon the next page; and, when the blackness that divides two worlds is swept away, *there* the history of each life written by ourselves remains legible in eternity."

"The coals were scattered from the hearth in Jerusalem by the armed heel of violence. That did not put the fire out, but only spread it, for wherever they were flung they kindled a blaze."

"The worst man is least troubled by his conscience. It is like a lamp that goes out in the thickest darkness."

"Beware of the slightest deflection from the straight line of right. If there be two lines, one straight and the other going off at the sharpest angle, you have only to produce both far enough, and there will be room between them for all the space that separates hell from heaven."

"There then sit the two kings, like the two in the old story, 'either of them on his throne, clothed in his robes, at the entering in of the gate of the city.' Darkness and Light, the ebon throne and the white throne, surrounded each by their ministers; there Sorrow and Gloom, here Gladness and Hope; there Ignorance with blind eyes and idle aimless hands, here Knowledge with the sunlight on her face and Diligence for her handmaid; there Sin, the pillar of the gloomy realm, here Righteousness in robes so as no fuller on earth could white them. *Under which King, my brother?*"

Illustrations like these seem to be woven into the very texture of the discourse.

There remains one other point. When the text is found, and the sermon built, how can it best be presented to the audience? What is the best method of delivery? "Think about a text until you have something to say, and then *go and say it, with as little thought of self as possible.*" Here again we must supplement Dr. Maclaren's advice by a reference to his practice. One question we may ask here: What are those things, other than vanity and conceit, which are sure to hinder a public speaker from that self-forgetfulness which is one of the prime elements of success? Are not two of the worst evils, those of confused arrangement and ambiguous language? Here Dr. Maclaren has much to teach the young preacher. He is a master of analysis and logical arrangement, and is equally at home when unfolding the sequence of thought in an expository discourse, or unweaving the various strands of some complex idea. This

faculty will be best displayed and illustrated by one or two sermon-outlines.

COL. I. 9-12

"This prayer sets forth the ideal of Christian character.

"1. Consider the Fountain or Root of all Christian character: 'that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.'

"2. Consider the River or Stem of Christian conduct: 'walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing.'

"3. We have, finally, the fourfold streams or branches into which this general conception of Christian character parts itself: (*a*) 'bearing fruit in every good work'; (*b*) 'increasing in the knowledge of God'; (*c*) 'strengthened . . . unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness'; (*d*) 'giving thanks unto the Father.'"

I KINGS XVII. 1

"1. Life a constant vision of God's presence.
2. Life echoing with the voice of the Divine command. 3. Life, on the prophet's part, full of conscious obedience."

THE PRAYING CHRIST.—LUKE XI. 1

"1. The praying Christ teaches us to pray as a rest after service; 2, as a preparation for important steps; 3, as the condition of receiving the Spirit and the Brightness of God; 4, as the preparation for sorrow."

Little need be said here as to Dr. Maclaren's

command of a rich, vigorous, and clear style. There is little haziness or ambiguity about either the thought or language. His sentences are clear as crystal, and admirably adapted to bring the claims of the truth home to the consciences and hearts of men. And, assuredly, Dr. Maclaren cannot be charged with *preaching himself*, or with using the pulpit as an instrument of intellectual vanity. His varied culture, his large gifts, his broad charity, his firm grip of the essentials of the truth, together with his large-hearted faith and his power of edification, are all used for the purpose of extending the knowledge of the gospel, and making larger the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Such an intense loyalty to Christ enables the preacher to utter the message which has been entrusted to him "with as little thought of self as possible," and with that boldness of speech which is the heritage of faithful men. Every true preacher must make Paul's words the law of his own life: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Dr. Maclaren evidently believes that this is the one all-sufficient and all-powerful theme for the pulpit to-day. In one of his later volumes he writes: "It is becoming more and more plain that the tendencies of thought now are bringing us full front with this alternative—either Jesus Christ or none. Either He has shown us God, or we are left to grope in the dark." From this serene standpoint of faith, our preacher still proclaims the efficacy of the gospel. May he long be spared to continue his glorious work!

IX

ARCHBISHOP MAGEE

*The office of the preacher is to smite the rock, that the living waters
may gush forth to satisfy the thirst of the age.*

SUCH was the conception which Archbishop Magee early formed of the great work of his life. The careful reader of his sermons can hardly fail to notice that he was, in the main, true to this conception, and that it was his constant aim to bring the living truths of Scripture home to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. Amidst all the varied duties and multifarious calls of his episcopal work, he never forgot that he had been "called to the ministry of the Word of God." And probably it will be on his pulpit power that his fame will chiefly rest.

Dr. Magee was a man of strong, vigorous personality; who, in stirring and eventful times, gave evidence that he was able to "rule well in the Church of God"; and was quite competent to face and, if need be, do battle with both political opponents and recalcitrant clergymen. His method of dealing with the latter reveals something of his spirit, and shows what manner of man he was: "My maxims in governing are, *first*, never hit if

you can avoid it; *second*, when you *do* hit, *smash*; *third*, when the smashed man admits that he is smashed, then apply the plaster of forgiveness and civility."

It was as a preacher that Dr. Magee first came into public notice. When quite a young man he was chosen to occupy the pulpit of Quebec Chapel, which was considered at that time "the most prominent and important post for a preacher in London." From that day his promotion was rapid: from London he removed to Enniskillen, and then became successively Dean of Cork, Bishop of Peterborough, and Archbishop of York.

Preaching was Dr. Magee's lifework, and to it he devoted all the energies of his mind and heart. He looked upon himself as a Divine Ambassador, and was careful to prepare himself adequately for his great mission. His wife tells us that "he always made his sermons a subject of prayer; he never preached without praying for guidance and wisdom. He was very near God, God was in all his thoughts. He never thought of self; for though on going into the pulpit he was always nervous the first few minutes, he often said, 'After a minute or two I forget that anyone is present; my subject has such possession of me, I can think of nothing else.'"

Having such a lofty conception of the work which the pulpit has to accomplish, he was careful to base his teaching on the foundation of Holy Scripture. He knew that the preacher's task was to make men understand the counsel of God, and to bring the commands and exhortations of Scripture

so clearly and forcibly before them that it should touch the conscience, and give inspiration and illumination to daily life. Hence, while willing to gather suggestions from all sources, he felt that the true authority and real power of the pulpit rested on the "Word of God." And it was the preacher's duty to see that the Bible was regarded as a living book, always in touch with the life and thought of to-day. Speaking at the Church Congress in 1866 on the "Preaching of Dogmas," he defined the attitude of the preacher towards the authority of the Bible, in view of the repugnance of modern thought to what it regards as obsolete dogmas—

"The remedy lies, not in perpetual alteration of the original but in perpetual translation; lies in the art of rendering these old and fixed forms into modern thought and language, not in the book but in the pulpit. Then there should be a perpetual clothing of the framework of truth with the flesh and colour of modern life, and thought, and feeling. This is the special office of the pulpit, to mediate between what is in danger of becoming the dead book, and the living hearts of the people. The book is to be the standard of the preacher, and the preacher is to be the illustrator of the book."

The best and clearest statement of his own method of sermon preparation is given in a letter found in the *Biography* written by his friend Canon Macdonnell.

"My plan was, never to look about until I had the *idea* (in the Coleridgean sense) of my sermon sketched, and then to read everything bearing on

the subject. The great aim of the preacher who wants to excel is to master the mind of his hearers : to do this he must first master his subject, so as to be able to present it in a new light. He who can do this will always command attention.

"Another rule I always followed was never to have *more than one idea* in my sermon, and arrange every sentence with a view to that. This is extremely difficult. I don't recollect succeeding in doing this more than three times.

"A good sermon should be like a wedge, all tending to a point ; eloquence and manner are the hammer that sends it home ; but the *sine quâ non* is the disposition of the parts, the shape. I am convinced this is the *secret* of sermon-making. I gave two years to the study of it.

"If you want to excel, never read a sermon, and study *arrangement* and *effect*."

In an address on "The Art of Preaching" he further emphasises the same ideas. Preaching is described as "the art of word-painting in the pulpit," and is distinguished from all other forms of word-painting. In the pulpit the word-painter is not showing a completed work, but is painting a picture in full view of those to whom he speaks, filling in the details before their eyes, and he necessarily aims at inducing the spectators to wait until he has finished. He must therefore, in the first place, secure and keep the attention of his audience. He can only do this by making "the backbone and the skeleton firm and strong," and by "a clear logical connection between the various parts of the discourse." "The secret of power

in attracting attention lies in this: arrangement, arrangement, arrangement. . . . The great secret of arrangement is to have an introduction in which the whole of the Sermon lies mapped out."

Secondly, he must aim at being understood by a mixed congregation. An important requisite here is *unity of idea*. "Stick to one idea. This ensures it being better understood and better remembered. If when you have written your sermon you cannot give it a name, tear it up and begin a new one." Nothing must be allowed to overshadow this *main idea*; and the preacher need not "be afraid of repetitions," but should endeavour to "set the same idea before the mind in various ways, and exhibit it in different forms of words."

Examples of the Archbishop's skill in concentrating his powers upon a single idea, and urging that idea upon his hearers with all the might of his eloquence, are easily found in his published sermons. In a short series of "Sermons on the Creed," preached in Peterborough Cathedral during Lent 1887, this characteristic is very prominent. The first sermon of the series is occupied with "A Defence of Creeds"; and this is followed by four others, in each of which one idea is predominant. The titles of these sermons are sufficient to indicate the thoughts which govern them, namely, "God the Father," "God the Creator," "Jesus the Saviour," and "Jesus the Christ." Dr. Magee had little respect for sermons which left nothing but a vague impression upon the hearer. In a letter to one of his friends, which contains a criticism of one of Stanley's discourses, he says—

“It was, like all Stanley’s sermons, full of elegant and graceful speech,—you can hardly call it thought,—and full, too, of allusions to facts and names, and circumstances known to his hearers, which riveted their attention; and yet, no one sentence in the whole that bit or burned itself into your memory;—nothing that made you *think*, but only what made you, somehow, *feel* pleased with the preacher, and the subject, and yourself.”

The Archbishop set great value on the practice of extempore preaching, and urged upon young preachers especially the cultivation of this powerful adjunct to pulpit efficiency. The needed qualifications for it were, in his judgment, three, namely, nerve, fluency, memory. Concerning the first of these, he says: “Hardly any man has the full possession of his nerves when he preaches extempore for the first time. . . . But, after all, that nervousness is the greatest secret of success. It indicates an excess of nerve-power—that is, the power of impressibility on the audience; and none will ever thoroughly impress an audience without having had some such experience. This nervousness is what even the greatest speakers feel when they come face to face with their audience. It is only the excess of the feeling which is really painful, and the excess is very soon got rid of.”

Fluency is explained as the power to choose the best and most fitting words; not merely an easy and quick flow of language. The memory which is most helpful to the extempore preacher is a memory for ideas, so that they unfold themselves in logical order while he is speaking.

The very best preparation will be found in the combination of logical and consecutive thought with clear, bold, definite divisions; and then, after this, a full and carefully prepared manuscript of the sermon. An outline analysis of the leading thoughts should then be written—not for use in the pulpit, but to give confidence to the preacher and to impress the subject on his memory.

In the pulpit the preacher should aim at deliberate delivery and the clearest possible enunciation; the points of the sermon should be made clear and emphatic; and the concluding sentences should be carefully prepared so that he may end his discourse in a powerful and impressive manner, and not spoil a good sermon by “not knowing when and how to stop.”

Illustrations are not so frequent in the sermons of Dr. Magee as in those of some of his contemporaries; but he knew where to find and how to use them.

“The colouring of the sermon with thought, illustration, argument, and application. I cannot give any rules, or tell how this is to be done. The colouring is to be got from the human life with which we come into contact, with all its endless varieties of sunshine and shade. Watch the tide of human nature, and mark how it is broken by the stirring influence of joy or sorrow or fear. And as we watch it we learn how to steep our picture in the colour of life itself. Let us inquire of our own soul’s experience, listen to the argument of the unbeliever, to the lament of the sorrowful, to the cry of the despairing, let us watch the strong light which comes from many a Christian’s deathbed.”

We have selected two or three quotations to show how readily the Archbishop could use the common facts and incidents of daily life to illustrate Christian truth.

SELF-DENIAL

“Why is it that on the drill-ground and the parade-ground the soldier goes through the various exercises of the combatant? He does on the drill-ground and the parade-ground where no man is attacking him or threatening him—he does that which he would do on a natural battle-ground and someone were threatening him. The soldiers hold themselves in this or that posture, ready to repel an imaginary foe. Why? Because they are doing on the parade-ground what they know they will sometime have to do on the battlefield. And so in our Christian discipline. It is the parade-ground of the Christian soldier in which he practises, in things perfectly lawful and innocent, that self-denial he may require in the day of trial on the battlefield; and the Christian practises it because he never knows when he will find himself engaged in a deadly struggle with the enemy of the soul.

ISOLATION NO REMEDY FOR WORLDLINESS

“You can no more keep out unreality by going away from it than you can keep out the fog by building a wall. It will rise above the wall, it will penetrate through the crevices, until it fills the interior with its dark moisture—because no mechanical contrivance can keep it out; and so no isolation of

cell or convent can keep the world out of man's heart. It is the unreality of the world, the vanity of the world, we are called to renounce."

MAN'S CONDITION GROWS OUT OF CHARACTER

"Most of you have heard of a place well known as Norfolk Island—a far-away island—beautiful in itself to look at, healthy, charming. It was made for a time the residence of convicts so desperate and evil that they were banished from the other convict establishments as being too bad for them, and sent there. They were sent to a place of their own, for which they had specially fitted themselves,—and what happened? Why, the place became such an absolute hell on earth, so detestable, miserable, so horrible the life these unhappy creatures lived there,—the life they made for themselves, remember,—that at last the establishment had to be broken up, and these men had to be dispersed, and Norfolk Island cleared of their presence. They had made that—of all places naturally a paradise—a hell, and by themselves! They were succeeded by another body of men—men who had been brought up in a secluded island of their own in the love and fear of God, and *they* made of it a paradise. But hell and heaven were respectively of these men's own making, and that is true always, believe me—men go to their own places when they die; and there never was a man who went to hell, or will go there, who has not fitted himself for it; and there never will be a man go to heaven who has not, by God's mercy, been fitted for heaven."

CHRIST IN US

"Every living thing has its own form or type to which it is always true, which always appears in it, and so makes it different from every other form. The acorn that we plant springs up always an oak. The seed of wheat springs up always wheat. The root of the vine we set sends up always the branching stem, the clustering grape. Its seed is itself, never another. And this is true of our own race and our own life. The race, the family, are true to their ancestral type. The ancestor, the parent, reappears in the child. Much he may have in common with all other men. Something he always has in which he is unlike to all others save to his own ancestor; so that it is a common form of speech to say, when any such ancestral likeness is seen, there is the father, or the mother, or the ancestor over again. So, when we speak of Christ being in Christian men, we mean that He, the Perfect Man, has produced on earth a new type of humanity; something that the world before had never known; something which should be found in every true member of the Christian family, and which can be seen and recognised as the likeness of Christ."

Dr. Magee had little sympathy with those preachers who take no pains with their work. One can imagine how emphatically he would have endorsed the opinion of the late Bishop Thorold: "The grand secret of the meagreness and flimsiness of modern sermons is the indolence of men, who will not take the trouble to read and acquire fresh knowledge, but are continually trading on their old

stores until the well is dry." Such a charge could not have been brought against the Archbishop. His sermons show that he was ever on the alert for any fact or allusion which could be made of service in the pulpit; and that he knew much of the history both of the present and the past, and could use it with effect. In one of his speeches to working men he "described a despotic monarch, in times past, surrounded with his courtiers and flatterers. He said the same danger which had been the ruin of kings was now threatening the working men. He drew a picture of a modern demagogue paying the same court to the people that royal flunkeys paid to kings, and finished off by saying that a demagogue was only a *flunkey* turned inside out."

Another of his statements shows that he was fully alive to the weakness and inefficiency of many occupants of the pulpit: "Thicknesse gave us a really good and useful sermon on the blossoming of Aaron's rod—a text I never heard applied to the ordaining of ministers before, but which fits it very well: only the idea of what a number of *sticks* there are in our ministry that never blossom would keep occurring to my mind."

No one would rank Magee with the great theologians of the Anglican Church; but there is evidence that he studied closely the tendencies of modern theology, and formed his own judgments on points of current controversy. Thus he was able in his preaching to meet the needs of his own times; and sometimes his sayings are such models of condensation as to sum up a current controversy or plausible argument in a few plain words.

"Christianity solves, as no other philosophy can, the enigmas of life. Christianity (strangely) is at once the most pessimistic and the most optimistic of all the philosophies of life. . . . You tell me of sorrow, suffering, and the misery of humanity, of mystery and difficulty and perplexity, and I tell you of the time when all shall fade away in the white light around the throne on which sits the Lamb that died for mankind.

"That Scripture is God's word, seems to me exactly parallel to Christ is God.

"But the *humanity* of Christ had its infirmities and imperfections; so has the *humanity* of Scripture. Nevertheless, the whole book and the whole Man are the Word of God, *ῥῆμα* and *λόγος* respectively.

"Gambling has in it this element of sin—that it stimulates the passions of avarice and covetousness; and therein lies the close proximity of all betting to sin."

Such extracts as these are of value in showing us the sources of the preacher's illustrations, and the manner in which he uses them. But they can give us no conception of the preacher's power, and they are quite inadequate as a measure of his influence. Dr. Magee knew that the man—the man as a pastor and a Christian—makes the preacher. For preaching was to him a great and glorious calling, worthy of all the powers and capacities of the soul—

"The art of preaching! It is a great and noble

art. He who would attain success in it must cultivate the art of a diligent, faithful, and thoughtful pastor. . . . The very core of all secrets in preaching is to be possessed, controlled, directed by the Spirit of God."

X

DR. JOSEPH PARKER

There stands the messenger of truth : there stands
The legate of the skies : his theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
As thunder ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.

DR. PARKER has an intense and inspiring belief in the importance of preaching, and in the power of the preacher's great theme—the Cross of Christ. A lady is said to have asked him once, "What is your hobby, Dr. Parker?" And the reply came instantly, "Preaching." "But I mean in addition to preaching?" "Preaching, nothing but preaching; everything with me ministers to preaching." In one of his later books he has given us his mature opinion as to the great themes of the preacher. "The Apostle Paul has laid down the subjects of his ministry, and I do not see why I should change them. They are great subjects. They are at once historical and prophetic. Let me slowly repeat them: Christ died, Christ was buried, Christ rose again, Christ was seen, Christ was seen of me. This is the true modernness.

The element of personal experience and testimony is essential to true preaching. No matter who else has seen Christ, if I have not seen Him myself, I cannot preach Him."

In discussing the question, "How does Dr. Parker get his sermons?" we are face to face with a difficult problem. The story which is told of the painter of a bygone generation rises irresistibly in the mind. Being asked by one of his acquaintances how he mixed his colours so as to produce the vivid impression which always characterised his pictures, he replied, "With brains, sir!" Dr. Parker's sermons are so much the product of his own personality that no other answer than this is possible, save the one which he has himself given us. In an "interview" with Mr. Blathwayt he is reported to have said—

"I feel more and more, when preaching, that I have next to nothing to do with the holy exercise. When I stand up to preach I hardly ever know the sentence I am going to utter. The subject itself I endeavour to know well. I mark out two or three main lines of exposition. As for words or sentences, I am not only the speaker, I am also one of the audience. I could honestly tell you at the end of the discourse that I have enjoyed it, and that I have profited by it as much as if it had been spoken by another man. Under such circumstances, I take no credit whatever for the sermon. I feel Christ's words have been true for me, 'In that hour it shall be given you what ye shall speak.' I never think of it as my own. . . . This is the only answer I can give to your very plain question; this is a brief note, as it were, out of what to me is a very deep and sacred experience."

This, of course, is the experience of the practised and mature preacher, and is not of much value for guiding those of us who are commencing the great task. Fortunately, however, Dr. Parker published some years ago a volume of counsels to preachers,¹ which we may assume to be the outcome of his early experiences; and we shall endeavour to give our readers some idea of the views which he then held on the subject of sermon-getting.

In the first place, Dr. Parker believes that *the discipline of broad intellectual study is necessary for the preacher*. For his great work he needs the gifts of intellect, native shrewdness, and spirituality. But the intellect must be trained if it is to do efficiently the work which is required of it. And in the training and discipline of his intellectual powers the young preacher must be on his guard against the perils to which this training exposes him. He must not so fully absorb himself in intellectual pursuits as to look with contempt on the ordinary occupations and pursuits of life, or to blunt his sympathies with the practical men and women who are engaged in them. To intellectual training he must add the vigilant cultivation of the heart in a loving fear of God, and must so maintain the freshness and force of his spiritual life that his heart may be aglow with love to Christ, with love that will express itself in enthusiastic service for his fellow-men.

Dr. Parker was educated at University College, and in the early days of his ministry had the benefit of Dr. Campbell's criticism and advice for a considerable period. The story of those early days is

¹ *Ad Clerum*.

full of interest. On Saturday evening the Doctor would invite his young colleague to his study, and would hear him read his sermons for the next day. Then would come an examination on the reading of the week—the Doctor giving out each week some theological, critical, or biographical volumes to be read, and on the following Saturday expecting a careful analysis of their contents, as well as a criticism of the argument and style of the author. Sometimes Dr. Campbell would give advice on the choice of texts, *e.g.*—

“In choosing a text, don’t be anxious to find anything very peculiar; some men indulge a kind of pride in preaching from mottoes: for example, such words as ‘if,’ ‘so,’ ‘now,’ ‘but,’ etc., have been adopted as texts. The ignorant and childish may be struck with admiration of the preacher’s talent who can ‘make a sermon out of so little’; but the more steady and intelligent will be grieved that God’s word is so little honoured. Never disjoint the sentence, always have complete sense, and then you will have some ground to work upon. . . . Having chosen a suitable text, confine yourself to it entirely—*make it speak*, there *is* music in it; pray that your fingers may touch the chords aright so that melody may be evoked. You are not expected to preach a body of divinity in every discourse. Some pulpit rambles range the whole field, *flying* everywhere, but *digging* nowhere. Be you a *digger*; sink the shaft fearlessly, the gold is embowelled in the deep places; go down, persevere, and bring it up.”

Dr. Parker himself recommends to young preachers

the following method of preparation:—Take a text from the apostolic writings, read it carefully, in the original language—*if you can*; trace the various meanings which may be attached to the principal words in other parts of the New Testament; satisfy yourself as to the meaning and grammar of the passage; commit your decision to writing, then take the opinion of two or three of the most critical expositors.

Having thus secured a firm standing-place, write in regular order the principal thoughts which the passage suggests to your mind; this will be the skeleton of your sermon. Next proceed to elaborate your thoughts, writing on wide lines so as to leave room for erasure and interlining. When the full draft is written, begin at the beginning and strike out all the long words and superfine expressions, *e.g.* “methinks I see,” “the glinting stars,” “the stellar heavens,” and similar phrases. Then re-write the discourse with the most watchful care, determined that everybody who hears you shall have no doubt of your meaning, write as if every line might save a life; and, when you have made an end of writing, put the manuscript away, and go to your public work with the assurance that all faithful and loving service is accepted of the Father, and will be crowned with His effectual blessing.

Continue this practice diligently for five or seven years, and the advantage of the discipline will show itself down to your latest efforts as a preacher. And never forget that nothing less than the severest preparation will avail; or that anything else will secure success, if the requisite labour be withheld.

Dr. Parker earnestly exhorts young preachers to avoid what are called *clever* sermons—sermons which are built on detached expressions, broken sentences, or perverted accommodations of texts; as such discourses easily lead to the display of the preacher's gifts, rather than to the edification of the hearers. The preacher must take care not to "handle the word of God deceitfully," but remember that it is his duty to reveal and manifest, so far as he is able, the whole revealed counsel of God. "The word of God is living and powerful"; and, by careful and prayerful study the preacher must seek to understand its meaning and purpose, so that he may rightly use the marvellous weapon which God has put into his hands.

The *text* should not be regarded as complete in itself, but only as one of a series; and, by patient and earnest study of the whole class, the preacher should endeavour to grasp the entire truth which they express, and so impress it, in all its strength and beauty, on the mind and heart of the audience. His first duty in regard to the text is, not how to divide it, but to find out its *exact critical and doctrinal meaning*. Every word should be interrogated, so that words of doubtful etymology may be rightly understood, that the sense of ambiguous words may be discerned, and the bearing of parallel passages made clear. Thus he must try and discover the particular truth which it is intended to convey, and when he has *found the truth*, and not till then, proceed to discover the best method of treatment.

In the treatment of his subject the preacher should avoid sensationalism, but at the same time should

take care to prevent his sermon from being *sensationless*. He is not an irreverent mountebank sent to play grotesque and ridiculous tricks in the pulpit, but he is there to make an *impression*. He should study the example of Christ and of the apostles, and strive by following them to make his preaching *sensation-creating* in the best sense.

To this end there should be some *variety* in the plans of his sermons; they must on no account be all of one pattern. If possible, all commonplace divisions should be avoided. Some of our great preachers have used at times very commonplace divisions; they had the gift of elaboration rather than of analysis, and were able from a very unpretentious beginning to build a powerful and impressive discourse. But men who are without their genius should find a more excellent way. As an example of fresh and forceful divisions, Dr. Parker gives the following outline by a friend:—

“1 Pet. v. 7. Every man is a traveller carrying three bundles: (1) the past, (2) the present, (3) the future. The preacher takes down the bundles and examines them.

“(1) Is full of sin, unhappy memories, neglected duties, etc.

“(2) Is full of the troubles of daily life, the deceitfulness of riches, worldly engagements, etc.

“(3) Is full of fears, anxieties, apprehensions, etc.

“Then the preacher exhorts the supposed traveller to cast all these cares upon the Divine strength.”

We give another, and a vastly superior outline, taken from one of the Doctor's published sermons—

THE DEFENCE OF STEPHEN.—ACTS VII.

“ This great apology shows the method of *Divine revelation and providence*.

“ 1. Notice how God has from the beginning made Himself known to *individuals*. Stephen relates the great names of history.

“ 2. Stephen recognises the great fact that God has constantly *come along the line of* SURPRISE. Revelation has never been a commonplace.

“ 3. Stephen, looking over the whole range of human history, shows how God has all the time been *overruling improbabilities and disasters*.

“ 4. Mark how exactly this whole history of Stephen's corresponds with *Christ's method* of revelation and providence.”

Mr. Beecher's sermons are commended as the best models of pulpit addresses known to Dr. Parker (in 1870); but we should counsel the young preacher who is seeking examples of fresh and forceful divisions, to study both the earlier and later sermons of Dr. Parker and Dr. Maclaren.

The business of the preacher, however, is not merely to make skilful and effective outlines, but to bring men to the Saviour; and, if this great purpose is to be achieved, every sermon must be prepared with that end in view. “ Some preachers plan beautifully, but build nothing; they are nothing but outline.” You must “ study the idea of your text; try to pierce it to its very heart, and, having seized the truth, expound it with all simplicity and earnestness.” The man who aspires to be a faithful preacher must “ preach on the right subjects”; his “ preaching

must be founded on authority—the authority of the abiding and unchangeable word of God”; and must be concerning those things which are necessary to salvation. In order to do this the preacher must not only labour diligently, but must maintain a close and fervent communion with God. “Believe me, in proportion as a sermon is a mere effort of the intellect will it be a failure, and in proportion as a sermon is an expression of the heart will it succeed in doing good. . . . To be truly effective, a sermon must be part of the preacher himself”; he must therefore have life in his soul, the very life of life, the very life of God.

The preacher is counselled to pay particular attention to his language, and to all that pertains to a correct utterance, so that his style may be at once simple, clear, and effective.

“Simplicity is the last attainment of progressive literature; and men are very long afraid of being natural, from the dread of being taken for ordinary.”¹

Further, Dr. Parker counsels the preacher to cultivate to the fullest extent the great gift of *mental composition*. He should be able, at least after he has conquered his early difficulties, to arrange his thoughts in his own mind without the help of written memoranda. “Some preachers can compose a sermon from beginning to end without writing a word, others must be shut up in the silent study with writing materials in order to compose a dozen sentences.” This habit, if acquired, will be invaluable in later life, when time cannot be spared for the toilsome preparation which is so necessary to

¹ Lord Jeffrey.

the beginner. It will also aid very materially in the acquirement of the power to preach extempore. The counsel of Dr. Watts on this point is pertinent and valuable—

“Get the substance of your sermon, which you have prepared for the pulpit, so wrought into your head and heart, by review and meditation, that you may have it at command and speak to your hearers with freedom; not as if you were reading or repeating your lesson to them, but as a man sent to teach and persuade them to faith and holiness. Deliver your discourses to the people like a man that is talking to them in good earnest about their most important concerns and their everlasting welfare; like a messenger sent from heaven, who would fain save sinners from hell, and allure souls to God and happiness.”

Dr. Parker endorses this as “the counsel of true wisdom”; and those who watch his pulpit utterances will be constrained to admit that the advice is well embodied in his own example.

One other thing the preacher must carefully cultivate: the power to discover and use illustrations.

“Most unquestionably, the use of figures is to be highly commended; and it is because of a strong belief that a good deal can be done to improve what I may (for want of a better name) call the metaphorical faculty, that I urge you to insist upon your mind giving you something in the way of illustration. Look for figures; work for them; take them in their rudest outline, and improve them. It is hardly necessary to remind you that figures are not to be expected to meet all the points of a sub-

ject; let it suffice to have one main line of application, and to shed light on one particular point."

Above all things, the preacher must remember the great part which his own personality and experience play in the work of sermon-making, and the utter uselessness of instruction and example where character and reality are wanting. "No preacher was ever made by rules. You may have a bag of excellent tools, but if your fingers be unskilled your instruments are of little use. Does the *spade* make the gardener? Does the *easel* make the painter? A man may read guide-boards and finger-posts all the days of his life and yet never take a walk; or he may be profound in Bradshaw and yet never enter a train."

In Dr. Parker's opinion, in order to be a *successful* preacher, a man must keep diligently his own heart, and ever remember that his salvation is derived entirely from the Cross of Jesus Christ. Such personal duties as retirement from the world, self-examination, close and devout study of the Bible, are indispensable to any man who would grow in grace and qualify himself for usefulness in the pulpit. Above all, he must pray fervently and unceasingly for the Holy Ghost, and discharge all his duties in the spirit of the Master. He must remember that the great object of his ministry must always be the glory of God in the salvation of souls, and that in this, as in all other spheres of labour, "God always sets the severity of discipline before the reward of glory."

These are some of the principal counsels we have noted in a perusal of Dr. Parker's book. We feel

that however true they may be in their portrayal of the methods of the author in his earlier days, they very inadequately represent that process of sermon-making which has given to the world as its most finished product *The People's Bible*. Genius, even the genius of the pulpit, can neither be analysed nor explained perfectly. But, while such a task is utterly beyond our powers of exposition, we may devoutly thank God that the proclamation of the gospel of His Son is still entrusted to men who can say with Dr. Parker, "It is to me a pleasant conviction that no office is to be compared, for interest, reality, and importance, with the office of the Christian ministry."

XI

F. W. ROBERTSON

There are many echoes in the world, but not many voices.—GOETHE.

FEW sermons of modern times have been so widely read, or have won such favourable criticism from all classes, as those contained in the small volumes which preserve for us the substance of the pulpit teaching of Robertson, of Brighton. The reason for this may perhaps be found in one of Goethe's terse sentences: "There are many echoes in the world, but few voices." Robertson belongs to the select company of those who possess a voice, and know so well how to use it, that their teaching reaches the ears of thousands who would turn with scorn and contempt from the utterances of less original teachers.

His fame was indeed posthumous, for he published nothing of importance during his lifetime; although he wielded a marvellous influence in Brighton during the later years of his ministry. Of this period the Rev. G. J. Davies writes: "Many a business man from London, many a young officer, many a person from the fashionable world of Vanity Fair, dropped into Robertson's chapel, and came away with a set purpose in life, feeling that after all there was some-

thing better than this world, and that a sermon from such lips need not be a dull thing, but a fountain of thought - suggestive, satisfying teaching — an enjoyment, at the same time that it led to good resolves, and became a means of grace to the listener.”

Our present purpose is not to sketch Robertson's life history, nor to analyse and criticise his religious teaching, but to endeavour to give some answer to the question, How did he prepare his sermons? A full and detailed reply to this question is impossible, owing to lack of information; but we find scattered here and there in the *Life and Letters*¹ some valuable hints, which enable us to get a glimpse of his general preparation for the pulpit.

That preparation *began early* in life, and was *life-long*. He entered upon his clerical studies with some disadvantage, as he had been destined to, and was preparing for, a military career; but, having once chosen his profession, he devoted himself to preparation for it with characteristic energy and ardour. At the university he disciplined his mind by a careful study of some of the great masters of human thought. Plato fascinated him; but, noting the defects of his philosophy, he turned to Aristotle, “to balance the scale of his thought.” He also studied the writings of Edwards and others, and made himself completely master of the *Sermons* and *Analogy* of Bishop Butler. He found recreation in a close study of nature and natural history, and careful readers of his sermons will not fail to note how effectively he could use illustrations drawn from these departments of knowledge. At a

¹ *Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson*, by Rev. Stopford A. Brooke.

later period he confesses that his college reading was too discursive, and that he was often lured away from the required studies to other subjects suggested by his reading. In a letter to a young student he strongly insists on the *necessity of a good plan* for reading—

“At college I did what you are now going to do—had no one to advise me otherwise; . . . and I now feel I was utterly, mournfully, irreparably wrong. The excitement of theological controversy, questions of the day, politics, gleams and flashings of new paths of learning, led me at full speed for three years, modifying my plans perpetually. *Now* I would give two hundred pounds a year to have read on a bad plan, chosen for me, but steadily.”

In another place he writes: “The man who succeeds in life is, allowing for the proverbial exaggeration, generally the man *unius libri*.”

He was early led to see the necessity of gaining a *clear and accurate knowledge of the Bible*. He formed the habit of committing to memory a certain portion of the New Testament daily, during the time occupied by dressing in the morning. Before leaving Oxford he had in this way gone twice through the English Version, and once and a half through the Greek. He possessed great powers of arrangement; and long afterwards, in conversation with a friend, he said that, “owing to this practice, no sooner was any Christian doctrine or duty mentioned in conversation, or suggested to him by what he was writing, than all the passages bearing on the point seemed to array themselves in order before him.”

He gave part of every day to *devotional reading*, and found it of great service for his work. "He read slowly *The Imitation of Christ*; but, when he could, he chose as his books of devotion the lives of 'eminently holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and high-mindedness, but communion with God besides.' . . . He read daily the lives of Martyn and Brainerd. These books supplied a want in his mind, and gave him impulse."

He lived in an *atmosphere of prayer*. It had become the habit of his life at Oxford; and at Winchester he had a list of "subjects for prayer" for each day in the week. All through life it was his constant resource: in hours of gloom he would pray until he was brought into the felt presence of God.

To this he added the practice of rigorous and *severe self-examination*. With his over-sensitive temperament this habit of constant self-dissection had a morbid tendency. He mapped out his inward life, marked down his sins and failures, and noted the graces and gifts more especially needed in his character. It is easy to say that such rigorous self-inquiry speedily develops into a species of self-torture: but does not this habit explain, to some extent at least, the power he had of dealing with men who were struggling with sinful habits and doubts, and leading them to the true Source of strength?

In Robertson's earlier days as a curate he gave Saturday morning only to the preparation of his sermons for the following day; but under the influence of Dr. Boyd, his rector at Cheltenham, "he

studied for them on Thursday and Friday, and wrote them carefully on Saturday." In Brighton, however, he seems to have abandoned this practice of carefully-written preparation, and to have been content with a *well-thought-out plan* of the discourse, of which he had no other record than a few jottings on scraps of paper. In fact, many of his published sermons are printed from notes written out after the sermon was delivered, or from shorthand reports preserved by the care of friendly hearers.

It must not be supposed, however, that this meant less preparatory work: it was only changing the form and method of preparation. Robertson gave much time and thought in order to store his mind with *material* for preaching. His mornings were sacredly reserved for study, and his habits of work were systematic and thorough. His advice on "reading" is an embodiment of his own methods—

"The book is worth reading in this way: study it, think over each chapter and examine yourself mentally, with shut eyes, upon its principles, putting down briefly on paper the heads, and getting up each day the principles that you gained the day before. This is not the way to read many books, but it is the way to read much; and one read in this way, carefully, would do you more good, and remain longer fructifying, than twenty skimmed."

Again—"I have got a small popular book on chemistry, which I am reading now, of 160 pages. I have read little else for a fortnight; but then I could bear an examination on every law and principle it lays down . . . I know what reading is, for I could read once, and did. I read hard, or not at

all—never skimming—never turning aside to merely inviting books; and Plato, Aristotle, Butler, Thucydides, Sterne, Jonathan Edwards, have all passed like the iron atoms of the blood into my mental constitution.”

Thus his mind was disciplined, and his memory charged with the noblest utterances of the world’s great thinkers. But, above all, he had *a definite idea of what he wanted to teach* to his fellow-men.

Mr. Robertson possessed a marvellous faculty for clear and logical arrangement of thought, and he was “acutely conscious of the melody of ordered words.” He could plan his divisions, and keep to them from beginning to end of the discourse, without recourse to the few notes he had previously prepared. His mind was full of his subject, and as he spoke thought followed thought in regular and due order. “Without method,” he said on one occasion, “memory is useless. Detached facts are practically valueless. All public speakers know the value of method. Persons not accustomed to it imagine that a speech is learnt by heart. Knowing a little about the matter, I will venture to say, that if anyone attempted that plan, either he must have a marvellous memory, or else he would break down three times out of five. It simply depends on correct arrangement. The words and sentences are left to the moment; the thoughts methodised beforehand; and the words, if rightly arranged, will place themselves. But upon the truthfulness of the arrangement all depends.”

Special preparation was made for his *courses of sermons*. For his lectures on the Book of Samuel

he read, not the usual commentaries, but Niebuhr's *Rome*, Guizot's work on Civilisation, and some books on political economy. For the "Lectures on Genesis" he prepared fully and thoroughly; reading, amongst others, such books as Pritchard's *Physical Theory of Man*, Wilkinson's *Egyptians*, and some German authors. He tried always to preserve his independence of thought. Mr. Brooke writes: "He endeavoured to receive, without the intervention of commentators, immediate impressions from the Bible. To these impressions he added the individual life of his own heart, and his knowledge of the life of the great world. He preached these impressions, and with a freedom, independence, variety, and influence which were the legitimate children of his individuality."

He was very painstaking in his endeavours to convey truth to even the dullest intellect. No work was too small for him, and he tried to be fair, patient, and calm in argument, even with those who opposed him most bitterly. "Somehow he reached the most dense in a Sunday-school class. He led the children to elaborate for themselves the thought he wished to give them, and to make it their own."

Yet even this highly gifted and cultured preacher needed the stimulus which comes from contact with other minds, in order to fit himself for the duties of his office. In a letter written towards the end of his short life he says: "I have spent this evening in reading thoughtfully and meditating on Neander's *Doctrine of St. John*, imbuing my mind with a tone of thought for Sunday next. I find that to be the only way in which my mind works. I cannot copy,

nor can I now work out a seed of thought, developing it for myself. I cannot light my own fire; but, whenever I get my fire lighted from another life, I can carry the living flame as my own into other subjects, which become illuminated in the flame."

The above is only a meagre and very general reply to the question with which we started, yet it contains nearly, if not quite, all the available information. Robertson has told us little of his own methods of sermon-making; but one paragraph written by him reveals the fact that his own experiences were a most valuable help, and taught him the best methods of meeting the wants of the weary and heavy laden—

"The most valuable book I possess is a remembrance of trials at which I repined, but which I now find were sent in answer to my prayer to be made a minister. *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio*. And those sermons in which these have had much share I have found tell most; and I trust that God will bring in His flock by such a thing as I. I am sure if He does, it will be strength made perfect in weakness indeed."

XII

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

Whenever I have been permitted sufficient respite from my ministerial duties to enjoy a lengthened tour, or even a short excursion, I have been in the habit of carrying with me a small Notebook, in which I have jotted down any illustrations which have occurred to me by the way. My recreations have been all the more pleasant because I have made them subservient to my life-work. The Notebook has been useful in my travels as a mental purse. If not fixed upon paper, ideas are apt to vanish with the occasion which suggested them. A word or two will suffice to bring an incident or train of thought to remembrance; and therefore it would be inexcusable in a minister, who needs so much, not to preserve all that comes in his way.—C. H. SPURGEON.

DURING the latter half of the nineteenth century no preacher was more widely known, or more affectionately regarded by the masses of the English-speaking people, than Charles Haddon Spurgeon. When the history of preaching for this particular period is adequately written, the historian will find it necessary to describe the achievements, and record the fame, of a greater number of preachers of the first rank than have ever before been crowded in the short space of fifty years. And amongst these "princes of the pulpit" no one will take higher rank, or be more deserving of lasting fame, than the renowned preacher at the "Tabernacle."

Mr. Spurgeon has, on many occasions, given to

theological students and embryo preachers a large amount of valuable advice on the subject of preaching; and we shall assume that in so doing he has drawn largely from his own experiences, and therefore described (even if indirectly) his own methods of work.

Few preachers are so well worth studying as Mr. Spurgeon. Popular as a preacher from the beginning of his career, and always drawing large audiences, he was no less popular as an author. Every week he published one sermon, sometimes two; the average number for the year being about sixty. Nearly 20,000 copies of each sermon were circulated on publication; and, as the whole of his sermons from the beginning are kept in print, and have a steady sale, the number issued must be immense. In addition to this, the *Sword and Trowel* had a circulation of about 12,000 copies monthly; while for the *Treasury of David* and the various other volumes from his pen there is a constant and steady demand. A mind capable of producing fruit of such quantity and quality must be characterised by "great energy, fertility, and force"; and the counsels which are the outcome of such wide experience and unbounded activity are certain to be exceedingly practical and useful.

We are quite aware of the danger we run in trying to describe Mr. Spurgeon's methods. Some years before his death, when addressing a company of students, he said, "You all know how I prepare. You have read descriptions. So have I, but I never recognised any of them as true." We may be only adding one more to the long list of failures; but if

we cannot succeed in describing "how Mr. Spurgeon worked," we shall not go far astray if we give his own advice, and point to him as an example and guide for other and less competent workers.

There is no doubt that Mr. Spurgeon owed some of his power and forcefulness in preaching to his early training. He began to speak to village congregations when quite a youth—very much in the same way as a young local preacher would commence in the Methodist Church. Speaking of those early days, he says—

"During the last year of my stay in Cambridge, when I had given up my office as usher, I was wont to sally forth every night in the week except Saturday, and walk three, five, or perhaps eight miles out and back again on my preaching work; and when it rained I dressed myself in waterproof leggings and a mackintosh coat, and a hat with a waterproof covering, and I carried a dark lantern to show me the way across the fields. I had many adventures; . . . but what I had gathered by my studies during the day I handed out to a company of villagers in the evening, and was greatly profited by the exercise. I always found it good to say my lesson when I had learned it. Children do so; and it is specially good for preachers, especially if they say their lesson by heart. In my young days I fear I said many odd things and made many blunders, but my audiences were not hypercritical, and no newspaper writers dogged my heels; and so I had a happy training-ground, in which, by continual practice, I attained such a degree of ready speech as I now possess. There is no way of learning to preach which can be compared to

preaching itself. If you want to swim you must get into the water; and if you at the first make a sorry exhibition, never mind, for it is by swimming as you can that you learn to swim as you should."

One of his hearers in those early times tells of his own misgivings when he first saw the youthful preacher—misgivings which were speedily allayed when the youth rose to read and expound "the lesson for the day." This gentleman soon felt that the lad was no *ordinary preacher*, and, as he could not make him out, ventured to ask one day "wherever he got all the knowledge from that he put into his sermons." "Oh," was the reply, "I take a book, and I pull the good things out of it by the hair of their heads."

For general preparation Mr. Spurgeon believed in hard study, wide reading, and long-continued meditation. He started life with a fair education for an English youth who was debarred by religious convictions from the advantages of a university training. But he never neglected the cultivation of his own mind, nor ceased to pursue his own studies. He had always been a great reader, spending a good deal of time over the old English divines, and filling his mind and memory with the teaching of God's word; not neglecting any branch of study that could help his own work. From statements made in London newspapers we gather that he had given attention to astronomy, chemistry, zoology, ornithology, etc., and that field sports also had helped to enlarge his knowledge and extend his store of illustrations. He had been found sometimes busy over a pile of technical books on fox-hunting

or salmon-fishing, deer-stalking or grouse-shooting.¹ He was a firm believer in the theory that nothing strengthens or improves the mind so much as pouring a stream of new ideas through it constantly, to preserve its freshness and prevent that stagnation which is often the product of a *specialist study*.

One of the main difficulties in the path of a young preacher relates to *the selection of texts*. A preacher who has published more than two thousand sermons has acquired a right to be heard on such a subject as this, especially when he confesses that he himself has experienced similar troubles. Mr. Spurgeon did not believe in any careless or haphazard selection, but earnestly advised every preacher to seek for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that he might be led to the right message for the people who listen to his words. His own difficulties, however, arose chiefly from an embarrassment of riches, and not from the bewilderment of poverty. "I confess that I frequently sit hour after hour praying and waiting for a subject, and that this is the main part of my study; much hard labour have I spent in manipulating topics, ruminating upon points of doctrine, making skeletons out of verses and then burying every bone of them in the catacombs of oblivion, sailing on and on over leagues of broken water, till I see the red lights, and make sail direct to the desired haven. I believe that almost any Saturday in my life I make enough outlines of sermons, if I felt at liberty to preach them,

¹ Before this paper was published in *The Preacher's Magazine*, a proof was submitted to Mr. Spurgeon. In his reply he denied having read anything about grouse-shooting, but admitted that he had read books on "deep-sea fishing, salmon-rearing, and bird-fancying."

to last me for a month; but I no more dare to use them than an honest mariner would run to shore a cargo of contraband goods." *How can the right text be known*, in the midst of such profusion? By the way in which it grips your mind. "When the text gets a hold of us, we may be sure that we have a hold of it, and may safely deliver our souls upon it. . . . You get a number of texts in your hand, and try to break them up; you hammer at them with might and main, but your labour is lost; at last you find one which crumbles at the first blow, and sparkles as it falls in pieces, and you perceive jewels of the rarest radiance flashing from within. It grows before your eye like the fabled seed which developed into a tree while the observer watched it."

Having found a text, we need to pray over it, and to use all "fitting means to concentrate our thoughts," and direct them into the right road; and one of the best methods of doing this is to consider the needs of our congregation, that so we may adapt our message to meet their wants, or their trials and temptations. It is wise also to take stock of our previous topics, and thus avoid a monotonous repetition of a few truths. "I think it well frequently to look over the list of my sermons, and see whether any doctrine has escaped my attention, or any Christian grace has been neglected in my ministrations." If, sometimes, the mind is sluggish, and the preacher can neither find a suitable text nor proceed with his sermon, his best remedy will be "to turn again and again to the word of God itself," and ponder over it until his understanding and intellect are roused to vigorous activity; or "to read some good suggestive books"

—*e.g.* Gurnall, Trapp, or similar authors—until he “finds himself as free as a bird on the wing.”

Mr. Spurgeon’s advice on the subject of sermon-making contains much worth pondering. He believed that *every sermon should contain real teaching*; like the sower’s basket, it should always contain good seed, seed of the finest quality. “Brethren, weigh your sermons. Do not retail them by the yard, but weigh them out by the pound. Set no store by the quantity of words which you utter, but strive to be esteemed by the quality of your matter.” The matter should always *be congruous to the text*, or, at least, in very close relationship to it; and thus, in order to obtain variety, we should endeavour to expound that precise truth which is taught by the passage of Scripture under consideration. “The words of inspiration were never meant to be boot-hooks to help a Talkative to draw on his seven-leagued boots in which to leap from pole to pole.”

Sermons should be *full of really important teaching*, and should be so arranged as that in time the preacher will give a clear testimony to all the doctrines which lie round the gospel; always using as his master-theme the glad tidings of great joy, the good news of salvation through the atoning death of the Saviour. Trifling, even holy trifling, should find no place in the pulpit, which is sacred to the delivery of soul-saving truth.

A sermon is *not to be overloaded with too much matter*. “All truth is not to be comprised in one discourse.” “An old minister walking with a young preacher, pointed to a cornfield and observed, ‘Your last sermon had too much in it, and it was not clear

enough, or sufficiently well arranged ; it was like that field of wheat—it contained much crude food, but none fit for use. You should make your sermons like a loaf of bread, fit for eating, and in convenient form.’ ”

Above all, Christ is to be preached, always and evermore. This is what the world still needs, and nothing but the crucified Christ should form the chief burden of our sermons.

Mr. Spurgeon believed in *illustrations*, and preachers will find his sermons excellent models for study in this particular. “ Our life,” he said, “ has been mainly spent in *direct* religious teaching, and to that work we would dedicate our main strength ; but men need also to hear common everyday things spoken of in a religious manner, for to some of them this round-about road is the only way to their hearts. Theology is dull reading to the unconverted ; but mixed with a story, or set forth by a witty saying, they will drink in a great amount of religious truth and find no fault. They like their pills gilded, or at least sugar-coated ; and if by that means they may be really benefited, who will grudge them the gilt or the sugar ? ”

No doubt, Mr. Spurgeon’s facility for making sermons and finding illustrations was gained by attention to one of his counsels to students, namely, “ to be always in training for text-getting and sermon-making.” This seems to have been his constant habit. While residing at Cambridge he was once unable to find a text for his evening sermon in a certain village. Do what he would, “ the right text ” would not come. Presently he walked to the window, and saw on the roof of the opposite house a company of sparrows worrying a poor solitary canary. While observing

this, the words of Jer. xii. 9 came into his mind: "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about me are against me." After a short time Mr. Spurgeon "walked off with the greatest possible composure, . . . and preached upon the peculiar people and the persecutions of their enemies." Here both observation and reading have been wisely used.

Many things have been related respecting the rapidity with which Mr. Spurgeon prepared his sermons. An American writer, professing to speak from knowledge gained in a personal interview, says "that he commonly devotes but a half-hour to this purpose; only the heads of the sermon are put on paper, and the rest is left to the pulpit." Dr. Cuyler writes to the same effect: "It was six o'clock on Saturday when we bade him 'good-bye,' and he assured us that he had not yet selected even the text for next day's discourses! 'I shall go down in the garden presently,' said he, 'and arrange my morning discourse, and choose a text for that in the evening; then, to-morrow afternoon, before preaching, I will make an outline of the second one.'" If this was sometimes Mr. Spurgeon's plan, he did not *recommend* it to young preachers. When addressing the students at Hackney College only a year or two before his death, he said: "I knew a good minister who prepared very elaborately. He told me he got tired of the hard work, and one day preached a simple sermon, such as he would have preached in his shirt sleeves if he had been wakened up in the middle of the night. The people were far more impressed than by his usual discourses. I said,

‘I’d give them some more of that.’ *But I should not say so to you, young men.* This was an elderly man, full of matter.” For lazy preachers, and men who are so clever that they can preach without study or labour of any kind, Mr. Spurgeon has only scorn and contempt. “A man who goes up and down from Monday morning till Saturday night, and indolently dreams that he is to have his text sent down by an angelic messenger in the last hour or two of the week, tempts God, and deserves to stand speechless on the Sabbath.” The preacher should be always “foraging for the pulpit,” and laying up stores of knowledge for future use.

And this may be done even by the preacher with a small library and a few aids. To such workers Mr. Spurgeon gives admirable counsel: purchase the very best books; master every book you can get hold of; study well and prayerfully your Bible; make up for the lack of books by much thought; and study carefully yourself the needs of inquirers and of dying persons.

Our paper would be left incomplete if we did not mention what seems to us to have been one of the main factors of Mr. Spurgeon’s success, namely, his intense and vigorous faith. He knew how to use the language of the market-place, and spoke in plain, clear, forceful language; but he knew also the power of the gospel to save mankind, and no shade of doubt was ever allowed to weaken the decisiveness of his utterances. The motto of his life seems always to have been, “*We preach Christ crucified*”; and in this steadfast aim may be found the secret of his persuasive eloquence and his abundant success,

XIII

WILLIAM L. WATKINSON

Preaching is a subject of which we can never weary ; it has for us an abiding charm. For my own part, I love a book on homiletics as much as ever I did in my life. I read with eager expectation the last published lectures on the art of preaching, trusting to know how to do it before I die. It is to be hoped that you have the same curiosity and passion.—From "An Address to Theological Students."

MR. WATKINSON—the accomplished Editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, and an ex-President—is an omnivorous reader, and a vigorous and profound thinker. He is well known to his brethren not only as a fresh and original preacher, but as an earnest and powerful debater ; quick at repartee ; able to discover the weak places of an opponent's logic, and in the most good-humoured manner expose them to ridicule.

It is as a preacher, however, that Mr. Watkinson is most widely known, and his finest work is accomplished through the agency of the pulpit. A thoughtful, brilliant, and effective speaker, he is able to attract large congregations of business men at Leeds or Manchester in the middle of a working-day, and to hold them spellbound by his incisive and sparkling utterances. He can be sarcastic and humorous in turn, but knows how to keep

these qualities under wise restraint when in the pulpit. He is never dull, never commonplace; his sermons are studded with fresh and suggestive illustrations, apt and effective quotations, and with bright, sparkling sentences which linger in the memory like proverbs.

One wonders sometimes why Mr. Watkinson has never been selected as a *Lecturer on Preaching*, or induced by some genial editor to unburden his soul and enlighten his brethren, by revealing his own methods of study and his secrets of sermon construction. But we have no information that this has ever been done. Without the knowledge which comes from such "stores of information," the present paper will lack that full illumination which only the master's own lamp can supply. But, occasionally, Mr. Watkinson has broken the silence, and, in addresses to students and others, has uttered his convictions with regard to this great work and the spirit which should inspire the preacher for his great task. From these addresses, and from his published sermons, we may learn much that is pertinent and valuable.

Mr. Watkinson believes that it is the mission of Methodism "to preach, and to preach to the people." And he by no means shares the opinions of those who think that the pulpit has had its day. Preaching, in his judgment, is not going out of fashion, at anyrate in Great Britain.

"Some imagine that the priest is coming in and the preacher going out. A newspaper has just announced that fifteen hundred clergymen are to-day receiving confessions, when only a few years ago

perhaps only a score of them favoured the confessional. Despite these appearances, however, the world is not going that way. The twentieth century will demand something more serious than ritualism; a keen, active, intellectual age will find other work for the minister of Christ than the work of the priest. . . .

"On the Continent you see churches with two or three organs, but in which there is no pulpit: that does not express the genius of Methodism. There may be no organ, but there is always a pulpit; the essential thing is preaching, not music. We see many churches on the Continent, and many at home, where the conspicuous thing is the so-called altar; everybody can see that, whilst the pulpit is an insignificant object hidden in a corner; on the contrary, Methodism makes the pulpit the conspicuous feature of her sanctuaries. . . . I believe if Paul were to come back again he would approve our disposition of Church furniture. . . .

"Dissent in England has before it a tremendous struggle, but it will never die whilst it sticks to the great evangelical doctrines, and whilst it continues to produce a race of preachers who can state those doctrines with lucidity and power."

This is sufficient to prove that Mr. Watkinson has no mean idea either of the preacher's position or his power, and that he is full of hope respecting "the preaching of the future." There can be no doubt that he is right; the verdict of history is on his side, and this verdict is strikingly corroborated by the position which the true preacher holds in this country to-day. Wherever the pulpit is filled with *a man and*

a preacher, there it holds undivided and undisputed sway. It is unfettered and unbridled ritualism which causes the "decay of preaching."

But if the pulpit is to maintain its power and the preacher to fulfil his mission, he must thoroughly prepare himself for his arduous task. What are the principles which must guide and inspire him in this great work? Our author would reply that first and foremost the preacher must be loyal to Jesus Christ, and to the great evangelical truths preached by Him and by His apostles. If this is to be done, we must train ourselves to do several things.

1. "We must be prepared to *take infinite pains with our task*." Mr. Watkinson puts great emphasis on this point. He quotes, with approval, the late Prof. Drummond, who said, "The crime of evangelism is laziness; and the failure of the average mission church to reach intelligent working-men arises from the indolent reiteration of threadbare formulæ by teachers, often competent enough, who have not first learned to respect their hearers." He endorses this statement, and illustrates it in his own effective manner: "A friend of mine the other day showed me a parrot that drops at once a hollow nut; it instinctively knows when a nut has nothing in it, and immediately drops the fraud with curious disdain. The people have a similar instinct about preachers and sermons, and they will not waste their time over empty shells. The popular preacher of to-day, if he is to last, must speak out of a full understanding as well as out of a full heart."

2. The preacher "must learn to be *simple and interesting*." In his judgment, the fault of much really able preaching is that it lacks simplicity. It is characterised by that "stateliness" which Dr. Dale, in his later years, recognised as the great mistake of his own pulpit discourses. The preaching needed to-day must avoid technicality and scholasticism. "A brother in my circuit exhorted the people to 'trust in Christ with a simple, fiducial faith.' The blessed result of such an appeal I did not learn." . . . "A preacher with affectations of scholarship warned one of our congregations that 'a spirit of German transcendental ratiocination was creeping into the Church,' and as a menagerie of wild beasts happened at the time to be in the town, the congregation took alarm and a panic ensued." Scholarship the preacher must have, but it must never be paraded in the pulpit. The preacher must "find out acceptable words"; still he must not be professional, academic, or pedantic, but must deal with the people as they actually are, and speak in language which they readily understand.

The preaching of to-day should be *full of life and colour and movement*. "The immense popularity of the novel ought to teach us the value of a concrete and pictorial style." Mr. Watkinson illustrates this point by calling attention to the style of some of our most illustrious preachers, and points to Dr. Maclaren as "the Raphael of our pulpit, and Dr. Parker as its Rubens." But if we venture for a moment to differ from our mentor here, it is to say that neither in Spurgeon nor Beecher, in Maclaren nor Parker, will the homiletic student find a better

example of "the perfect illustrator" than in Mr. Watkinson himself. Study any of his sermons, say his recently published *Studies in Christian Character, Work, and Experience*, and note how brilliant and abundant are his exquisite illustrations. Here he stands almost without a rival, and is the best exemplification of his own counsel.

3. Again, the preaching of to-day should be *timely*. "Eloquence is timeliness; and immediateness, seasonableness are specially called for in this generation." . . . The preacher must "treat the great evangelical truths in the light of present-day knowledge and conditions." While his theology is fixed within certain limits, and may not perhaps be regarded as a progressive science, it must perpetually define itself afresh, and "make itself intelligible to society with all its new facts, experiences, and conditions." To enable him to do this, the preacher must be familiar with the great teachings of science, he must carefully study "all that the scientist can teach him concerning the new facts and teachings of nature," and thus enrich his sermon with new and forceful illustrations and analogies, and make it more authoritative to the people of his own generation. He must also watch the developments, the strivings, and the aspirations of the social world. While not ignoring the Fathers, the Puritans, and the commentators, he ought to know something of the discontents and scepticisms, the ideals and the aspirations which express themselves in modern "Social Science."

4. Mr. Watkinson further advises that "the preacher should speak *to the life from the life*." He

must know and love men. He *ought* to know theology, science, literature, but he *must* know the joys and sorrows of the human heart. This means that the preacher must possess and develop his own spiritual life, must understand and feel the truths which he preaches. "The preacher turns so swiftly and eagerly to the telling of things that he does not give them time to sink into his own soul. There is a passage in George Meredith bearing on this matter—a passage I earnestly commend to you: 'You see how easy it is to deceive one who is an artist in phrases. Avoid them, Miss Dale; they dazzle the penetration of the composer. That is why people of ability like Mr. Mountstuart see so little; they are so bent on describing brilliantly.' There is a world of truth here for the preacher. Many of us 'see so little,' because we 'are so bent on describing brilliantly.'" The true preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ realises in his own heart the truth which he proclaims.

We now turn from Mr. Watkinson's *counsels* to his published sermons, and note two or three of their most striking features. He has, like many great preachers, a happy faculty of finding his subjects in unexpected and sometimes startling texts. For example—Esth. iv. 2, "The Transfigured Sackcloth"; Rev. ix. 7, "And on their heads (the locusts) were, as it were, crowns like gold"; Mark i. 23, 24, "The Plea of Evil"; Psa. vii. 15, "Social Sappers." The list might be greatly extended, but is sufficient to show the preacher's power in this direction.

Sometimes Mr. Watkinson's outlines are models

of what outlines ought to be. Take, for example, the following :—

2 Chron. xxxiii. 9, "Worse than the heathen."

The penalty of rejecting the fuller light is that—

1. We become worse in faith and worship.
2. We become worse in hope.
3. We become worse in character.
4. We become worse in happiness.
5. We become worse in destiny ;

or—

2 Cor. xi. 14, "The Transformation of Evil."

1. The transfiguration of evil by (a) imagination, (b) philosophy, (c) society.
2. We indicate the path of safety amid these dangerous illusions.
 - (a) The chief danger of life lies in this moral illusion.
 - (b) Let us be sincere in soul.
 - (c) Let us respect the written Law.
 - (d) Let us constantly behold the vision of God.

Almost any other of the preacher's published discourses would furnish additional examples, if they were needed ; but these well indicate his skill in sermon-building, and his ability in setting forth different aspects of his subject.

Mr. Watkinson excels, as we have pointed out previously, in rich and varied illustrations. Pages might be filled with quotations showing his felicity and facility in this department of the preacher's art. But a few sentences from his most recent volumes must suffice. The reader will notice their freshness, their variety and spontaneity.

"The Chinese are said to be fondest of that dress which most effectually conceals their true figure ; and by a variety of sophistries we hide our real selves from ourselves."

"There is much about a man that cannot be put in a coffin."

"In Derbyshire some strange flowers spring up, the seeds of which were brought by a Crusader returning from Palestine. All other relics of the family have perished, yet these sweet frail flowers still bloom, keeping alive a certain memory of brave and saintly deeds . . . parables of that immortality of beautiful and noble deeds; ruin cannot breathe on them, age cannot wither them."

"Life seems to many people like that African forest which a traveller described as a forest of fish-hooks, varied with an occasional patch of penknives."

"Diderot said that the world was for the strong—what a message for some of us! But the whole course of history and literature contradicts him. If there is a place for power, there is also a place for weakness."

"Man opens a blossom with a crowbar; God opens it with a sunbeam."

"Ruskin tells us that only a great artist is fit to restore a picture. Most of us think differently. We are ready to rush in with our sandpaper and our pumice-stone, and we will try our hand at the finest picture in the National Gallery. The work of restoring a soul is far more delicate than that of restoring a picture, and it requires such delicate methods as only God can use."

"In the East the nest of the humming-bird is sometimes seen fastened by a spider's thread to the face of a rock; and in this marvellous combination of strength and weakness the frail beautiful creature is secure."

"When our sense of weakness drives us to the

Eternal Rock we are sheltered and safe, and live a life of delight and sweetness, as the jewelled bird does amid flowers and sunshine."

"Plato believed in moral beauty for a few aristocratic souls; Jesus Christ brings that beauty to the man in the street."

"Many a man black as a raven asks for the wings of a dove. Stay until you are as white as a dove, and wings will soon shoot after that."

"A cold magnet attracts to itself a variety of substances, but if heated its magnetic force gradually diminishes. So the heart of man draws to itself silver and gold; . . . but as God quickens it with spiritual life . . . its terrestrial magnetism dies down, . . . it finds its complete satisfaction in God and in His love."

Mr. Watkinson's sermons should be studied and his methods observed by all students of homiletical literature. Here, at least, the reader will find nothing of that "decay in preaching" which the critics sometimes talk about. In a French newspaper a sermon critic recently asked, "Who will give us back the great sermons of the past? Preaching lags behind in the general progress of the modern mind. It is becoming petrified in archaic forms, and has no contact with life. The language of sermons is hardly even the language of modern literature." And the critic goes on to ask for a "thorough modernisation of sermons." If he is really seeking for "modernisation of sermons," he might find all that he asks for, and more, in the published utterances of William L. Watkinson.

XIV

BISHOP SAMUEL WILBERFORCE

He is a combination of Macaulay, his own father (William Wilberforce), and Ezekiel.—LORD CARLISLE.

AMONGST the many scholarly, devout, and influential men who have graced the English Episcopate in recent years, we cannot recall any name more popular or more widely known than that of SAMUEL WILBERFORCE. Men of widely different opinions in other matters, concur in extolling his wise administration and gifted pulpit utterances. Dean Burgon sums up his character in few but fitting words: "An exquisite orator, . . . a persuasive preacher, . . . a faithful bishop." Guizot is reported to have spoken with great admiration of his preaching, saying "it was the only good preaching he had heard in England." The Earl of Carlisle, after hearing a speech of the Bishop's, which occupied two hours in delivery, wrote that, in his opinion, he "combined the qualities of his father, Macaulay, and the prophet Ezekiel."

There can be no doubt that Samuel Wilberforce owed much to his natural gifts, and that these were very largely assisted by the wise discipline to which he was subjected in his youth. He was himself

deeply conscious of the help which he had thus received. One who knew him well, writes: "He said that he owed his facility of speech mainly to the pains his father had taken with him that he might acquire the habit of speaking. His father used to cause him to make himself *well acquainted with a given subject*, and then speak on it, without notes, and trusting to the inspiration of the moment for suitable words. Thus his memory and his power of mentally arranging and dividing his subject were strengthened."

Though neither a close student nor a great scholar, he took pains to prepare definitely for the work of preaching. In his early days he kept a record of the course of preparation for each sermon, together with memoranda as to its efficacy when delivered. He was a keen and voluminous reader, could get through a book with great rapidity, and, as he possessed a retentive memory, the results of his studies were available for future use.

But his reading was not merely discursive, and such as was adapted to meet the pressing needs of the moment. His diary gives evidence of the breadth of his studies, and shows that he gave considerable attention to solid literature. Clarendon, Mosheim, Davison on *Prophecy*, Hooker, Leighton, Jebb, A. Knox's *Remains*, Kaye's *Tertullian*, Owen, and Romaine, are some of the authors mentioned. At this time, also, he learned the Epistle to the Ephesians by heart.

Another great help in his pulpit preparation was his power of concentration and observation. He was able to give his whole and undivided attention

to any subject under consideration, and equally ready to turn aside and fasten upon any new object which came before him. "If unexpectedly called on to preach, though as a rule he wrote his sermons, a few minutes of extremely concentrated attention sufficed for the arrangement of his thoughts and the preparation of his matter; the words seemed to follow as a matter of course." He seemed, also, to be able to take an interest in *everything*; and that his faculty of observation was well trained is evident from the fact that he was an excellent naturalist. This power of accurate observation often furnished him with illustrations for his sermons. For example, he notes in his diary: "Struck exceedingly by *faces*—history or prophecy in;—a poor woman especially in the street to-day—poor, sickly, and most distressed looking—suddenly lighted up with a face of *perfect pleasure*. I saw she was carrying a baby which smiled. Then she relapsed." This is accurately reproduced some time after in an Address to Working People. Again he writes: "*Blackdown*. . . . The morning views from my window wonderful. The cloud fringes lowering down with such wonderful shades of light. *Suggested sermon* on the hills about Jerusalem."

The facility he had of using thoughts suggested by passing events and familiar objects appears to have grown with use, and to have aided him greatly in addressing village congregations. In one of his *Confirmation Addresses* given in a Berkshire village he was explaining "that *forgotten* is not forgiven sin,"—and he reminded the lads how their footprints in yesterday's snow were all still *there*, although the

slight snowfall of last night had effectually hidden them from view.

Another trait in the Bishop's character, which was also a help to his preaching, was the intensity of his devotional life. When urging on some friends the use of the evening service of the Church of England as a help to personal devotion, he met the objection of "no time" by saying that he found "*a cab* an excellent place to say it in." His diary frequently records his inner thoughts respecting habits of devotion. He "fears being *scourged into devotedness*," he wishes to be as "a flame of fire in God's service," . . . "passionless for earth, impassioned for Thee." After his death a paper was found among the *memoranda* for his guidance during his episcopate, with rules for personal conduct.

"To serve God—in *His* way—through His grace—is all.

"Supreme importance of much study of Holy Scripture.

"Time for retirement before great occasions; ordinations, etc.

"The first *necessity*, to maintain a devotional temper.

"The first great *peril*—SECULARITY."

Again: "What I want is to have Christ *in me*, a presence, a power, a moulding life. . . ."

"After breakfast, prepared sermon on 'The Renewer.' Oh for some touch of His renovating hand in my deepest being!"

Those of our readers who are acquainted with the Bishop's *Addresses to Candidates for Ordination*—a book which every preacher will find helpful to his

spiritual life—will remember with what eloquence he insists on the necessity of being “diligent in prayer.” “A praying ministry must be a powerful ministry. For it is prayer which joins our weakness to God’s strength; it is prayer which honours God; it is in answer to prayer that the Blessed Spirit works. . . . He that goes without prayer about his ministry defies a host of cruel enemies to instant battle, and leaves behind him all his strength.”

Bishop Wilberforce was not only himself a great preacher, but he was a frequent hearer and a keen critic of other preachers’ sermons. His diary abounds in entries respecting preachers and sermons. And, while keenly observant of the good points, he was by no means blind to the weak places of a friend’s discourse. Such entries as the following show what a high ideal he had of the requirements of the pulpit orator.

“*Sept.* 24, 1867.—Bishop of Illinois’ sermon a flow of words without ideas, and very long, and nothing to the point.”

“*Sept.* 29, 1868.—The Congress began with service in St. Patrick’s: admirable sermon from Dean of Cork, of which the Bishop of Cork said, ‘It was an admirably arranged and delivered sermon, clever, eloquent, argumentative, illustrative, and had not in it gospel enough to save a tomtit!’”

“Stanton preached an earnest, useful, practical sermon on fasting, its duty, uses, difficulties, and temptations,—thoroughly evangelical; but rather an *imitation* of Liddon, and, though successful as an imitation, failing by suggesting the original.”

“—— read wretchedly; feebleness and affected-

ness. Confirmation, cold and few. I fear his ministry is ineffectual."

There is much more of the same kind. He seems never to have missed an opportunity of hearing a great preacher, or of recording his opinion of the sermon.

His early sermons were prepared with great care, and usually written out in full; and even when he was at the height of his popularity, and preaching extempore or from the scantiest notes, he usually had some sheets of paper before him, lest his example should hinder younger men from giving due care and attention to sermon-making. Even when long practice had given him great command of language, and wide reading and experience had enriched his mind with their ripe fruits, he rarely seems to have entered the pulpit without thorough and immediate preparation. In later life he often rose at five or six o'clock, to secure time for careful preparation. He seemed to his friends to have a passion for work; yet he confessed that naturally he was indolent, and had at first "to flog himself up to his work." But he believed in *overcoming difficulties*. The following advice, given to some ordination candidates, is probably the outcome of his own experience:—

"Settle thoroughly in your minds the greatness of what you have to do. Never mount the pulpit without having your whole spirit awed by this thought—you are to speak for God to men. The preparation for the work of preaching must be habitual and immediate. *Habitual*, that the mind may be full of the subject, without which we soon degenerate into narrow, technical, and frigid statements of the noblest truths, and also that accuracy may be obtained.

Loose, inaccurate declarations of God's truth make preachers of the word unawares the slayers of souls. *Immediate* preparation. Prayer. Patient labour to secure for our discourses depth, solidity, and order. It is *mainly idleness* which ruins sermons, which makes them vague, confused, powerless, and dull. Remember the somewhat caustic words: 'The sermon which has cost little is worth just what it cost.'

"Never preach habitually the sermons of others, whether taken in mass or in fragments—mechanically rearranged into a composite whole. Nothing short of incapacity can excuse this as a habitual practice, and then its use and its cause should be avowed with a humble shamefacedness which will preach for the unfurnished man. The practice of reading some full discourses of others on the subject on which you are about to preach is widely different, and is a most useful course."

Such advice, from one who was himself a master of pulpit eloquence, is extremely valuable. His own sermons were often the outcome, not merely of his studies but of his inmost feelings. When he was in great distress, arising from the knowledge that his brother Robert had resigned his archdeaconry previous to being received into the Church of Rome, he preached a sermon in Lavington Church on "*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*" One who heard it said that "he could never forget it, nor the insight that it gave into the sorrows of the heart of the preacher."

His advice as to the best methods of sermon-making is worthy of careful attention—

"To secure thought and preparation, begin, when-

ever it is possible, the next Sunday's sermon at least on the preceding Monday. Choose the subject according to your people's need and your power. Let it be as much as possible resolvable into a single proposition. Having chosen the subject, meditate upon it as deeply as you can. Consider, first, how to state correctly the theological formula which it involves; then how to arrange its parts so as to convince the hearer's understanding. Think, next, how you can move his affections, and so win his will to accept it. See into what practical conclusions of holy living you can sum it up. Having thus the whole before you, you may proceed to its actual composition. And in doing this, if any thoughts strike you with peculiar power, secure them at once. Do not wait till, having written or composed all the rest, you come in order to them: such burning thoughts burn out. Fix them whilst you can. I would say, Never, if you can help it, compose except with a fervent spirit; whatever is languidly composed is lifelessly received. Rather stop and try whether reading, meditation, and prayer will not quicken the spirit, than drive on heavily when the chariot wheels are taken off. So the mighty masters of our art have done. Bossuet never set himself to compose his great sermons without first reading chapters of Isaiah and portions of Gregory Nazianzen, to kindle his own spirit. In some such way set yourself to compose and, until you have preached for many years, I would say, to write, at least one sermon weekly. Study with especial care all statements of doctrine; to be clear, particular, and accurate. Do not labour too much to give too great ornament or

polish to your sermons. They often lose their strength in such refining processes."

The Bishop's power as a preacher did not lie so much in careful exposition of Scripture, or in deducing important ethical teaching from forgotten or unpromising texts, as in the way he had of bringing home Divine precepts to the heart and conscience of his hearers. From a perusal of some of his published sermons we should have said that there was a lack of proportion in the subjects of his preaching, and that he rarely brought his great powers to deal with the unconverted persons in his congregations. Yet a writer in the *Guardian*, in reporting a sermon preached by him at Banbury in 1850, says that it was a "vivid heart-stirring picture of the sinner in death and judgment, with earnest exhortations to repentance."

His sermons are not so interesting to read as those of other preachers we could mention. Compared with those of Guthrie, they are tame and dry. But still there is no doubt of his *dramatic power*. In his *Heroes of Hebrew History* we see how vividly he can paint old-time scenes, and make the past reveal its lessons for our life to-day. How well he uses an illustration from English history on the very first page of the book!—"Abram's birth was but two hundred and eighty years after the Flood: a shorter period than has passed since Queen Elizabeth sat under a tree which is still alive in Hatfield Park, and saw the approach of the royal messenger who brought her, instead of the expected warrant to a dungeon and a scaffold, the tidings of her succession to the throne of England." He had also a happy

way of sometimes summing up the substance of an argument in a terse, proverb-like sentence. This is a habit which it would be well for preachers to follow more frequently than they do. Such phrases linger in the memory when all beside is forgotten. One of the Bishop's hearers was so impressed with a sentence of this sort, that she remembered it when she could only describe the effect of the rest of the sermon. "*Remember, respectability is not conversion.*"

If we cannot rival the Bishop in his widely extended influence, or imitate his polished eloquence, let us endeavour to put into practice the lessons which he teaches us by precept and example. Those lessons are: *Careful Preparation* for the pulpit; *Constant Prayer* and communion with God to enable us to do our duty when in the pulpit; and a *Consuming Desire* to benefit and bless those who listen to our words.

"Get you up to the Cross of Christ; look at those wounds; see in them what sin is; see in them what is the greatness of your Master's love, and, as a ransomed sinner, minister to ransomed sinners; take your censer and run in and stand between the dead and the living, for verily the plague is begun."

XV

THE ORDINARY MAN

Take no model. Say or write what you have well considered in the most simple and straightforward way you can, and then you will make a style for yourself.—DR. HOOK.

IF it were possible to get a truthful record of the methods employed in manufacturing, or providing, the sermons preached on any single Sunday it would prove very instructive, and certainly most entertaining reading. The methods adopted by the great living preachers of to-day would, if fully described, furnish most of us with admirable examples and with various helps; while the story which would have to be told of those who *purloin* or *borrow* or *buy* "the sermons of other men" would provide ample material for serious thought respecting plagiarism and the ethics of the pulpit.

That this accusation is not made without clear and abundant evidence of its truth, may be proved by any one who will purchase copies of certain religious "weeklies," and scan the advertisement columns. A copy of a well-known paper (of recent date) lies before me as I write, which contains the following, amongst a number of other and equally promising advertisements:—

"THE PULPIT SERIES. Original Sermons for current quarter, now ready. Single Sermon, any Sunday, 1s.—Clergy write, 'Full of matter.' 'Teach personal holiness and practical religion.' 'Beautifully simple.' 'Far superior to anything I have seen of the sort.' Rev. —."

Other manufacturers cater specially for particular occasions and services; while, if you wish for a "sermon" manufactured *to order*, it can be specially prepared for the modest fee of 10s. 6d.

This is not the only method in vogue. A short time ago the writer was examining, in a friend's house, a recently purchased second-hand volume of sermons by a well-known American divine. One sermon was missing, having been cut very neatly from the book, without damaging the binder's stitching, and in such a manner as to suggest irresistibly that it had been done *with a purpose*.

Some clergymen, in giving advice to their younger brethren, counsel them to make one sermon for each Sunday; and if they have to preach twice, to borrow the second. Others, again, make a judicious compilation of sentences from other men's sermons, or carefully adapt for their own congregation the published discourse of some able divine. Canon Twells in his *Colloquies on Preaching* gives ample testimony to the truth of this statement. He describes a long conversation between two clerical friends, one of whom is relating his own experiences in the early days of his ministry: "Between breakfast and dinner I did manage to scribble a few pages, but even my own imperfect taste voted them so bald and unsatisfactory that in a paroxysm of vexation I

tore them up. What was to be done? The rapid approach of Sunday was inevitable. My eyes kept wandering towards certain volumes which were ranged upon my shelves. Only a few weeks ago I should have scouted the idea of preaching another man's sermon; but the climax of that day's work was the settling down to copy, with but few alterations, the admirable though somewhat stately discourse of a divine of the last century."

In another place, and where the speaker is supposed to be making an attempt to justify the practice alluded to: "A clergyman very rarely copies a man's sermon just as it is. He adapts it, or tries to adapt it, to his own delivery, and to the special circumstances of his congregation. He omits, he inserts, he alters, he makes it more or less his own by recasting, probably simplifying, many of the sentences. The sermon as a composition may not be improved by such a process, but it may suit the preacher better, and, as he hopes and believes, his people. . . . Sermons are frequently made up from various sources, the different portions being so dovetailed into one another as to defy intelligible description."

But passing from these, which can hardly be described as legitimate methods of obtaining sermons, let us describe the plans adopted by *an average preacher*,—or; as we have written at the head of this paper, by *The Ordinary Man*.

I should hardly have ventured to print the following pages, but for a suggestion made to me by a preacher of remarkable ability and freshness, originality and force: "We have been told how great men get *their* sermons; why don't you tell us how an

ordinary man goes to work? That would be much more useful." This, it must be confessed, is a somewhat difficult task, because, as a rule, ordinary men publish very little respecting their methods of work; and, moreover, do not make good subjects for popular biographies. It is hard to "make bricks without straw." From actual experience, however, one does know something of the difficulties which lie in the path of a beginner; and I will endeavour to relate briefly the methods which were most helpful in my early work, and which have proved themselves well adapted also for the needs of to-day.

Some years ago, at the expiration of my college course, I found myself on the way to my first pastoral charge, with some twelve sermons in my possession; these being, in my deliberate judgment, all of my little stock which promised to be of any real service. My church was in the north-east of Scotland, a solitary station, and for the congregation under my care two Sunday sermons and a week-night lecture had to be produced week by week! The task was no light one, and the problem was, How could it be accomplished?

Distrustful of my own inexperience, I sought help from all available sources, and was put on the right track by reading some of the best of the modern books on *preaching*. Spurgeon's *Lectures to my Students*; Dale's *Yale Lectures on Preaching*; Blaikie's *For the Work of the Ministry*; and Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, were amongst the most helpful volumes from this department of my library. From these I learned—amongst other things—the value of reading with special care any and every book

within reach which could elucidate, or set in a new light, the teaching of Holy Scripture; the help which could be derived from conversations with my hearers during pastoral visitation;—the advantage of following the course of the *Christian Year*, and thus bringing the *great themes* of Christianity prominently before the congregation at times when their minds were to some extent preoccupied with them;—in a word, to keep my mind open to all suggestions from any and every quarter.

One difficulty—an early one—was in finding striking and suitable texts. This was soon overcome, and by a method which has stood the test of some years' practice. In reading, I always kept on my desk loose sheets of paper, and, whenever any topic or text presented itself which promised to be fruitful for future discourses, it was transferred to one of the slips, together with any thoughts born of the moment. Sometimes a complete outline would in a few minutes be thus fixed for future use; and by the constant use of this plan I soon gathered together a large amount of *sermon seed*.

Of course, some books were much more fruitful than others in suggesting topics. Such sermons as F. W. Robertson's and J. H. Newman's; the Commentaries of Westcott, Lightfoot, and Ellicott; some of the papers in *The Expositor*, were amongst the best. But any book which stimulated thought, and especially if it roused and brought into play the antagonistic elements and views of the reader's mind, was sure to bring forth some fruit.

In *preparing* sermons, one of my most effective helps was found in following the advice of one of

my tutors: "Whenever you set to work to make a sermon, let your first question be, 'What do I want *to do* by means of this sermon?' Always have some definite object before you, and endeavour to secure that." This, I found, often kept me from that purposeless style of sermon-making which, in the words of one of our sermon critics, "aims at nothing, and hits it."

Early in the week the texts were selected; the *subject* of the sermon and its *object* definitely fixed—then, all the time that could be spared from other duties was given to special reading on the subject chosen; to the study of the lexicon and commentaries, so as to discover the real meaning of the texts; and, lastly, to the finding of some fresh and pertinent illustrations. Later in the week the sermon would begin to take form, and the preacher would endeavour to put his ideas into the clearest and plainest language at his command. Sometimes the sermon would be written in full, and an analysis of it made afterwards, for use in the pulpit; but more frequently a full outline only would be written, which would be carefully thought out and fitted for delivery during the daily constitutional walk amongst the Scottish hills. The latter plan is often found to be the most suitable of all for the extempore preacher. It has the advantage of combining the carefulness of the written with the fire, force, and freedom of the extempore discourse. It is needless to add that it should only be used by an experienced and practised preacher; beginners should write fully and carefully every sermon they preach, if they can possibly secure the necessary time. This was the plan adopted by

Father Faber. In the preface to one of his volumes, speaking of his sermons, he tells us—

“It has been my custom to have the notes of them, very full and detailed, prepared several weeks, often several months, before delivering them. They were then revised before preaching, and very often annotated immediately after preaching, when necessary or desirable changes struck me in the act and fervour of delivery. There is nothing which brings out any want of logical sequence, or any disproportionate arrangement of thoughts, more vividly than the act of preaching, and I have repeatedly profited by this fact.”

Faber's biographer informs us that he was “most careful in preparing everything he preached: with all his learning, force of language, and power of imagery, he always made notes beforehand, even for such little occasions as addresses to the children of the schools. He impressed the same frequently upon the Fathers, repeating that what was not carefully prepared was never worth listening to.”

But we must return to our own experiences. The week-evening lectures were, at first, somewhat of a difficulty. But the discipline of constant preparation kept the mind active and observant, and as the months passed on I rejoiced to find the difficulty wearing away. For a long time my custom was to preach expository discourses on a selected portion or book of Scripture. In this way the Epistle to the Philippians, the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Epistles to the Seven Churches, etc., formed the subjects of several series of discourses. This method served a twofold purpose: it kept the preacher to a close

and systematic study of the Bible, and gave the hearers some idea of the benefits to be gained by the careful and consecutive reading of definite portions of God's holy word.

Other helps to sermon-making were found in conversation with friends, and in careful observation of the topics and ideas which were most interesting to the members of the congregation. Sometimes, in a casual and desultory talk, ideas would be mooted which led the mind into fruitful meditations; and often my attention would thus be called to some need or peril of the times which would ultimately suggest the topic for a useful and perhaps a much-needed sermon. In these and other ways the sermon-drawer was always full of texts and topics.

Good illustrations were more difficult to find. Anecdotes could be had in great variety from published collections. But these did not often furnish the vigorous and pointed illustrations which the sermon required; and usually I had to seek them for myself. Some of the best were found embedded in the history and biography of Scripture; others, again, would appear luminous in the pages of the standard histories and biographies of to-day; while others were drawn from the facts of experience, or a careful observation of nature. But here the supply was never equal to the demand; and a wide range of reading was necessary in order to have always ready some appropriate and vivid illustrations.

I have now, so far as I have been able, fulfilled the promise made at the beginning of this paper, by recording some of the sermon-making methods of an *ordinary* preacher. I have no intention of setting up

these methods as models for imitation; but hope that those of my younger brethren who are sometimes troubled by the difficulties of sermon composition will gain, at least, a little help from the perusal of my own experiences. To these and to all my brethren I venture to commend the advice of Father Faber—

“Let us only preach and teach the Divinity of Jesus, no matter how uninviting may be the notion of theological sermons, and we shall soon see how hearts will melt without eloquence of ours, and how Bethlehem and Calvary will give out their rich depths of tenderness to the poorest and simplest of Christ’s humble poor.”

XVI.

ON PREACHING TO CHILDREN

Jerusalem was destroyed because the teaching of the young was neglected; for the world is saved by the breath of the school children.
—THE TALMUD.

ONE of the principal questions which the preacher is called to face to-day is, "How can I best reach, and most effectively preach the gospel to, the children who are found in such large numbers in the Sunday school and in the congregation? Shall I so arrange the order of service as to be able to give them a five minutes' talk every Sunday morning? Shall I preach specially to children at definite and stated intervals? Or shall I endeavour so to construct my ordinary sermons that they shall be interesting and attractive alike to the young and to those of mature years?"

Each of these plans has its advocates; and all possess advantages and disadvantages. To proclaim that a certain five or ten minutes in the middle of the service is set apart for "the children's portion," is to rouse into activity that remorseless child logic which concludes, that "with the rest of the service the child has nothing to do." To announce special

services for children dulls the edge of this objection, but, occasionally at least, only to meet opposition from other quarters. And the third alternative is a "counsel of perfection," which perhaps it is impossible for the ordinary preacher to reach. Yet the task must be performed. Every preacher must feed Christ's lambs, and in some way prepare himself for this duty.

To say that he has no faculty or aptitude for the task is not a sufficient excuse. He should train himself for it. Everything worth doing is difficult at the beginning. "It was once thought impossible," says Samuel Jackson, "to reclaim the profligate adults of our country. Wesley tried and succeeded. Napoleon was accustomed to say, '*Impossible* is the word of a fool.'" The power to preach to children is latent in every preacher. And although few are able to command the brilliancy and genius which marks the ideal preacher to children, there is little doubt that those who can produce discourses interesting to the adult may produce sermons capable of attracting and influencing younger minds.

The ordinary Homiletical Handbooks give scanty attention to this branch of the subject, and rarely bring it into prominence. But from the rapidly increasing volumes of children's sermons now issuing from the Press it is possible to gather many hints and suggestions.

In this paper we shall attempt two things—(1) to collect and classify the advice which is given by men of experience respecting the preparation of children's sermons; and (2) note the practice of

some of those preachers whose work is accessible to us in their published volumes.

I. ADVICE

It has been stated that "few persons are decidedly successful in speaking to children." Is there any satisfactory foundation for this statement? Probably there is an element of truth in it. But why is it true? Is the task so utterly beyond the powers of the ordinary man? Or does failure arise not so much from incompetency as from careless and mistaken methods of preparation? If the latter be the true reason, the remedy is plain. We must improve our methods.

The preacher to children ought always to keep in mind two or three fundamental principles. *He must believe in the possibility of child conversion.*

"We should expect all our children to be saved all the days of their life. Why not? If this be not true, the contradictory must be true. During the first days of infant life they are saved; if they die in infancy they surely go to be for ever with the Lord. If they grow up they become responsible, but not until they are capable of rejecting Christ. Are they not as capable of receiving, of accepting Him? And why may they not pass out of unconscious into conscious salvation?"

"But what of the facts? There are many facts which prove that children are actually converted in tender years—as soon as they are capable of choice. And we must remember that in the moral sphere a bad theory always creates bad facts, and a good

theory tends to create the right facts. . . . There is no fear of beginning with children too soon, if we begin wisely.”¹

If we carefully note how easily religious impressions are made on the minds of children; how real the unseen is to them; how near God is; how their hearts melt at the story of the love and sufferings of Christ, we shall acknowledge the reasonableness of this belief.

Further, *What is taught to children must be so taught as to stand the wear and tear of time as they grow up.* We must so teach that later experiences will not contradict the ideas which we have impressed upon them in youth. In other words, we must aim at being *true*, and to convey accurate impressions to those who hear us. Our ideas must be clearly conceived, and uttered in the simplest words we can find. We need not then be afraid to give the children of our very best. Our noblest thoughts will appeal to their conscience, and their imagination will be affected by felicity of arrangement and by the music of language. But ambiguity, and everything which would hinder the child from readily recognising and appreciating truth, must be strenuously avoided. For the child-mind is quick to discover inconsistency; and if once the preacher is convicted or suspected of this fault, his influence is largely weakened, if not absolutely destroyed. “Mother,” said a boy of five on returning from public worship, “do preachers always say the truth?” The reason for the question was easily discovered. The preacher had used familiar words in a sense

¹ Benjamin Hellier.

foreign to the child's apprehension, and his keen logic detected that the statement from the pulpit was not in harmony with his previous knowledge.

This incident will serve to show how necessary it is for a person addressing children to know something of their modes of thought. The preacher needs to be childlike in his talk, but he must not be childish. Children resent being talked to in baby language, and the sermon addressed to them must respect their intellectual powers. At the same time, it is necessary that both thought and language should be easily grasped. To come down in this way to the intellectual processes of children is not merely an affair of the spelling-book, it means getting into touch with their mental moods. And in order to do this, it will be necessary to read their books, to study their modes of expression, and to prepare both thought and language carefully.

The sermon must be short. Long sermons are absolutely inadmissible. The length of the whole service, including prayer, reading of Scriptures, four or five hymns, and sermon, should not exceed one hour. "Did you ever see a long sermon?" asked an aged preacher of two young friends who were visiting him. "I will show you one!" The study door was opened, and they saw a picture of two little children sitting on a high bench, in a corner of the church, fast asleep. The preacher to children ought to keep such a picture before him during his preparation of the sermon. Probably the lively town boys and girls of this age will not fall asleep, but they will find plenty of ways and means of conveying to the preacher of long sermons their distaste and dissatisfaction.

The text should be short, bright, striking, and easily remembered. Choose the shortest text you can find which contains your subject. The subject may be topical, so that the sermon is the expansion of some single idea ; or pictorial, based on a Scripture character, some incident of Old Testament history, one of Christ's miracles or parables, or a missionary scene from the Acts of the Apostles.

The lesson you intend to teach should be stated in the most simple and familiar language ; the arrangement must be clear ; and if divisions are used, they should be obvious, easy to retain in the memory, and closely connected with the central idea of the sermon.

Illustrations should be freely used, and will generally form a large part of the sermon. They must be carefully chosen, and so used as to emphasise the points of the discourse. Irrelevant anecdotes are worse than useless ; they convey no truth, and impress no lesson on the mind. Anecdote, allegory, analogy, famous or well-known pictures, dramatic scenes from history, and the facts and processes of nature, may all be used to impress the imagination, to rouse the attention, and to lodge truth in the memory of the child.

II. EXAMPLE

The difficulty here is to choose from an embarrassing array of riches. The number of volumes containing children's sermons has increased so rapidly in recent years that it is impossible to survey the whole field. Excellent specimens for study may be

found in such volumes as Dr. Stalker's *The New Song*; Dr. Cox's *The Bird's Nest*; Dr. Macmillan's *The House Beautiful*; Rev. Mark Guy Pearse's *Sermons to Children*; Rev. J. Reid Howatt's *The Children's Preacher*; in any volume of the *Golden Nails* series, etc. etc. Sometimes an admirable illustration of successful preaching to children may be found in the newspaper. Here, for example, is one taken from a recent issue of *The British Weekly*.

"Leaning forward a little at the close of the hymn before the sermon, Mr. Bonner¹ asked, 'How many bad boys would it take to make one good boy?' and added, 'This riddle was asked in a London ragged school.' After a moment or two a grimy hand was held up: 'One, sir, please sir, if yer treat him right.' Mr. Bonner never for a moment lost his hold on his auditory. He rapidly drew imaginary pictures on the wall behind him,—of a boy in a schoolroom, with the motto, 'I learn'; of a farm labourer, with the motto, 'I work'; of a soldier, with the motto, 'I fight.' Each topic was made more graphic by an object,—a book, a spade, a sword,—and developed by anecdote and illustration. In closing, he said, 'The true life is not all learning, or you would be all brain; nor all working, or you would be all muscle; nor all fighting, or you would be all fist. The three must go on together.'"

Examine the sermons in the Rev. G. Milligan's *Golden Nails*, and note the result. The topics chosen are such as are likely to interest children and secure their attention; e.g. "Golden Nails"; "Buds"; "God's Jewels"; "The Stork"; "As an

¹ Rev. Carey Bonner, of Southampton.

Adamant"; "Our Banner," etc. The texts are, in almost every case, brief, terse, and memorable. The divisions are simple, often expressing the lessons to be taught, and always brightened with anecdote or story. One or two examples will show this preacher's methods of division—

a. Children of Light.—Eph. v. 8

1. Children of light will put away from them all that is dark and bad.
2. Children of light will also have happy and contented hearts.
3. Children of light will shine for others.

b. At Play.—Matt. xi. 16, 17

1. Jesus takes notice of children.
2. Jesus takes notice of children at play.
3. Jesus takes notice of how you play.
4. Jesus uses children at play as a lesson to others.

c. As an Adamant.—Ezek. iii. 9

In this case the preacher explains the reference of the text to the prophet Ezekiel, and then tells in a brief but interesting manner the life story of Origen, who was called "the Adamantine."

From another volume, *The House Beautiful*, by Dr. Hugh Macmillan, the preacher may learn how the facts and processes of nature, fairy stories, gems of biography, the gleanings and reminiscences of summer holidays and foreign travel, may all serve to gain the attention of children, and convey moral and religious truth to their hearts. The illustrations in these sermons are generally new and always forceful. Almost every page will furnish excellent examples. We can only find space for one or two out of a large selection—

“Michael Angelo, when he was painting the walls and roof of the Sistine Chapel in Rome with his immortal frescoes, used for some of his best colours the red rock which he found near at hand, and which he ground to powder and mixed with oil. Darwin made the great experiments which have changed the whole aspect of natural history with the common glasses of his house and the common flower-pots of his garden. I knew a great botanist who lived in a remote part of the country when he was a lad, and could not get a paint-box with which to sketch the interesting things he discovered. So he made his own colours from the juices of plants and the powder of stones, and with drops of his own blood; and more beautiful pictures than those which he made with these rude materials I have never seen. You must therefore look more at yourselves and less at your tools.”

“The dark things which we fear are often the sources of our brightest joys. In nature it is in the darkness of the mine that we get the most radiant jewels and the most precious metals; and so in all darknesses we get the most wonderful and unexpected treasures. Look at the darkness of night, for instance; it seems to make creation so poor and empty, to rob it of all form and hue, of all heat and life, and yet it contains within itself things far more valuable than it takes away. The mysterious shadow into which the earth by its revolution on its own axis sweeps us every night, is one of the most beautiful arrangements of the natural world—one of the most striking proofs of God’s wisdom and love. All nature requires it quite as much as it does the sunshine.”

"Pure gold when melted contracts on cooling more than any other metal. It cannot therefore be cast in moulds, because in cooling it quits the side of the mould, and does not reproduce the pattern with sufficient accuracy. When Aaron made the image of the golden calf by melting the golden ornaments of the Israelites into a mould, he must, in order to have got a clear image, have debased the gold by mixing with it other metals which counteracted its natural shrinking. Thus the very form of his idolatry, as well as the essence of it, was a corruption of the purity of the fine gold which ought to be offered to the Lord. But Moses preserved the purity of the gold by forming all the sacred vessels of the tabernacle, not by moulding but by hammering—by beaten work!"

Dr. Stalker's volume is different from this last in many ways, but is one of the best volumes of *Children's Sermons* to be met with. The topics are all good, the texts well chosen, the divisions apt, and the lessons drawn are eminently suited to the needs and capacities of young minds. This volume claims the attention of every student of children's sermons on account of its careful and felicitous divisions. We append two or three specimens taken almost at random—

I. THE TONGUE

Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. xviii. 21).

The tongue is like a steed (Jas. iii. 3).

The tongue is like a sword (Ps. lvii. 4).

The tongue is like a serpent (Ps. cxl. 3).

The tongue is like fire (Jas. iii. 6).

II. A PICTURE OF FAITH

Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see (2 Kings vi. 17).

After a bright and clear exposition of the narrative the preacher thus divides his subject—

Eyes opened on Nature—to see God in His love, wisdom, and power.

Eyes opened on Providence—to see God as Guide, and to trust Him always.

Eyes opened on the Bible—to see Christ as “My Saviour.”

III. A MOTTO FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths (Prov. iii. 6).

God to be acknowledged: (1) in your play, (2) in your work, (3) in your companionship, (4) in your thoughts of the future.

The chief points to be noted in each of the three volumes from which our examples are taken are—
Charming simplicity of style; admirable arrangement of thought; fresh and felicitous illustrations. And these will always command success in preaching to children.

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